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RECOLLECTIONS OF  
A LONG LIFE  
—  
LORD BROUGHTON  
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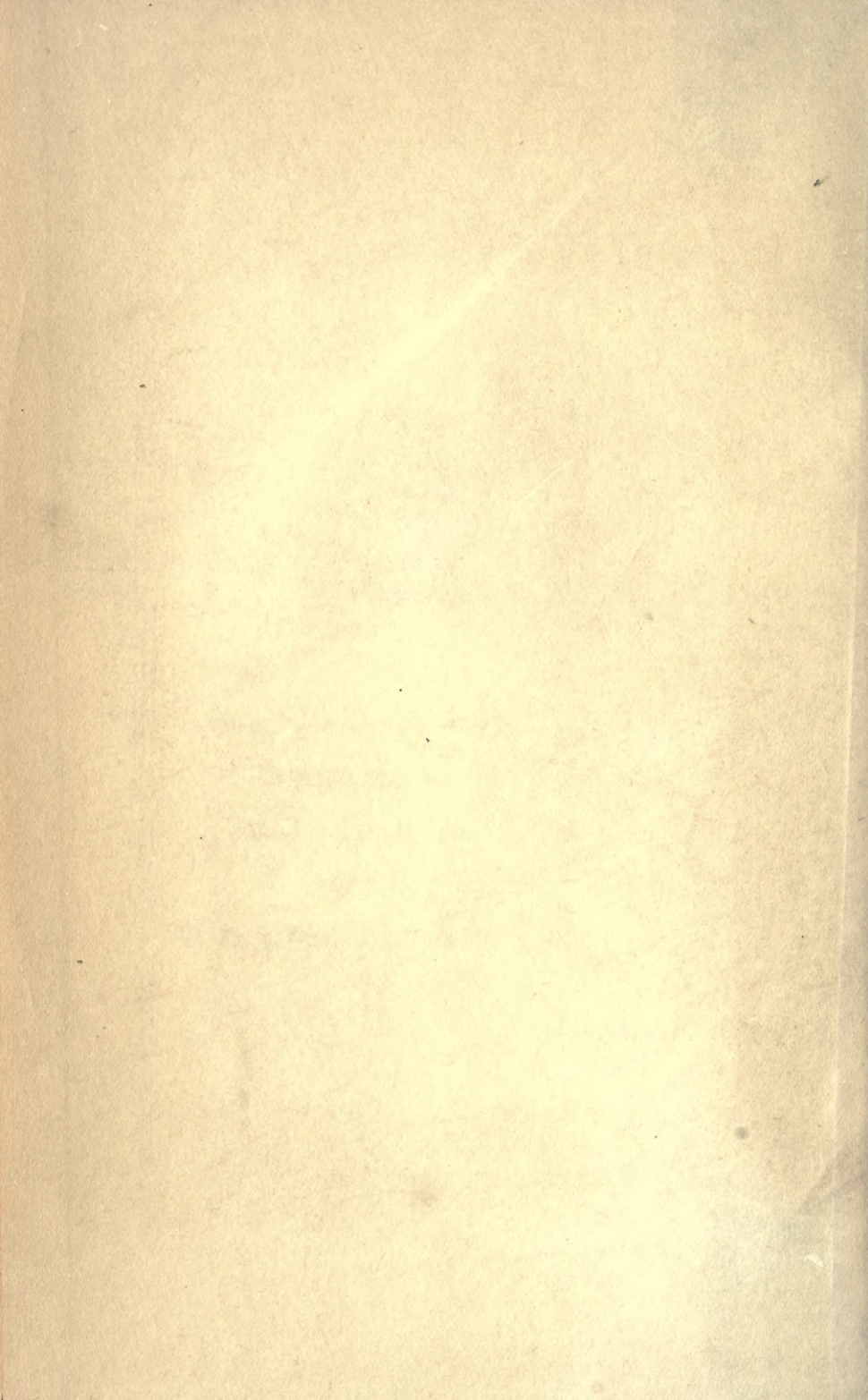
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RECOLLECTIONS OF A LONG LIFE





Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!  
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate  
Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,  
That in our aspirations to be great,  
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,  
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are  
A beauty and a mystery, and create  
In us such love and reverence from afar,  
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named them-  
selves a star.

*Childe Harold*, canto iii.

FIRST EDITION . . . . . *July 1909*  
Reprinted . . . . . *November 1909*







*James Prichard, R. A. pinx.*

*Walker & Woodcut, photo.*

*Lord Byron  
in an Albanian dress.  
from a picture in the possession of M<sup>r</sup>. John Murray.*



87/98

# RECOLLECTIONS OF A LONG LIFE

BY LORD BROUGHTON  
(JOHN CAM HOBHOUSE)

WITH ADDITIONAL EXTRACTS  
FROM HIS PRIVATE DIARIES

---

EDITED BY HIS DAUGHTER  
LADY DORCHESTER



WITH PORTRAITS. IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II. 1816—1822

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From a portrait by Thomas Phillips, R.A., in the possession of Mr. John Murray.

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From a portrait in the possession of the Lord Kinnaird.





# RECOLLECTIONS OF A LONG LIFE

## CHAPTER VIII

*July* 29.—Set off with Scrope Davies, his servant, and Poisson, at half-past eight in the morning in Scrope's carriage to Dover. Arrived there by half-past five. 1816.

*July* 30.—Set off in the *Flora* packet and arrived at Calais. We went to Quillad's. Found the carriage I had left at his house in last July all safe. Supped with the banished Beau Brummell, who, after beginning on £15,000, lived for twenty years on about £8,000 a year, and had to run away owing about £50,000—in its way as great a fall as Napoleon's. He is as tranquil. He told us the particulars of the agent's conversation with Lord Jersey. . . . He said the Prince owned to Lord Jersey that the Whigs lived among the best company.

I could hardly believe my eyes, seeing Brummell in a greatcoat drinking punch in a little room with us. He is learning French and Italian. . . .

*July* 30.—Took leave of Brummell. Passed through Gravelines and Dunkirk, and crossed the Belgian frontier about seven o'clock.

1816.

*July 31.*—Set out for Bruges. At this place, the plan I had formed of going to Brussels first and then to Antwerp, was given up on the information of a Yorkshireman, who told us we should go from Ghent to Antwerp.

Went to Ecloo, thence to Ghent, where we put up for the night, and arrived at Antwerp the next day.

*August 2.*—Left Antwerp, passing through Malines and Vilvorde to Brussels. We went to the Cathedral at Malines. The admirable oak pulpit representing a rock under which St. Paul is falling from his horse, made me observe St. Paul looked like a woman. The pretty girl who showed the church very gravely said: "*Ah, oui, il était fort jeune au temps de sa conversion.*"

John W. Ward and Wilmot had joined. W. remarked this answer, and said this spirit should be encouraged.

W. said that a piece of sculpture there was "*nullæ magnæ quassationes,*" and the other laughed heartily.

*August 3.*—Brussels. Dined at the table d'hôte. Rally of Vienna there and three others, and then in came another gentleman, who put himself at the head of the table. . . . He said he was a Prussian by oath, but owned at last he had been Chancellor of State to Napoleon, and had been the man who wrote Napoleon's first abdication from his dictation. He said that he had been done by Ney. He told me that it was impossible



to write shorthand so quick as Napoleon generally dictated; that his ideas were more *pressées* than those of any man; that he never wrote, but scrawled now and then a remark on the margin; that Montalivet, the Minister of the Interior, had once made a fine memoir for him, and he put *qu'on me dise ce que vaut ce galimatias*. 1816.

He said Napoleon should have made himself King of the mob; he owned everything as to his wishing to reign imperially. He said an explosion was certain, and that France would now have been free had not Napoleon come back—everything was ready. At present there was no organisation, but all were of one mind. He praised the Duke of Bassano; his only fault was an admiration of the Emperor, but *de bonne foi*, not for interest.

De Pradt<sup>1</sup> was a rogue; he came one day suddenly to Napoleon's headquarters; "*Qu'est-ce que vous faites ici, Mr. l'archevêque?*" said Napoleon; "*Il faut qu'il soit un aumônier pour le Dieu Mars,*" said the sub-almoner.

When Talleyrand lost his place in 1814, and was dropped into Chancellor of the Legion of Honour, De Pradt was employed to write his pamphlet about March 30, in which he told all the world that the restoration of the Bourbons was

<sup>1</sup> The Abbé de Pradt (1759-1837), a deputy to the States General at the outbreak of the Revolution; became an émigré; but afterwards secured the favour of Napoleon and was made a Baron: Bishop of Poitiers, and afterwards Archbishop of Malines. In 1812 he was appointed French Ambassador at Warsaw, but he was not successful, and was recalled, and deprived of his office of Great Almoner.

1816. owing only to Talleyrand, Abbé Louis, Vitrolles, and himself, who over-persuaded the Emperor of Russia, at first adverse to the measure. This was true, and a man who would tell so much would tell anything: he was a clever man, however. We had a deal of talk. I jabbered bad French.

He told us that he was the man employed to take orders from Napoleon to Marie Louisa at Blois, in favour of whom, at first, he intended to abdicate. He could not, however, get across the lines. He and all present said the King of the Netherlands gave the completest protection to the French; that he had decidedly told the French Ambassador that he could not infringe the Constitution here by attacking the liberty of the press.

Rally told us that there was a report that Louis XVIII. had quarrelled with Wellington, and that shortly after, at Court, the King said, "*Mons. le Duc, on dit que nous nous sommes embrouillés.*" The Duke was going to speak and to kneel to kiss hands; "*Embrassons-nous à la française,*" said Louis, and embraced him before the whole Court.

*August 4.*—From Brussels we went to Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, and Bonn.

*August 6.*—We left Bonn, passed through Coblenz, Bacharach, Mayence, Worms, Mannheim, Heidelberg, and Carlsruhe, entering Schaffhausen on August 13. We had seen no real town since Carlsruhe.

*August 15.*—Set off with a *lacquais de place* 1816.  
to the famous fall of the Rhine. . . . We crossed  
in a boat without a keel, which rolled about,  
but was pronounced very safe, and climbed up to  
the château of Lauffen, which immediately over-  
looks the fall. . . .

Went down a flight of wooden steps into a  
wooden gallery just under the main stream of  
the fall, where it is indeed very tremendous and  
magnificent, and whence at first it ought always  
to be seen. . . .

*August 17.*—Hired horses for Geneva. Arrived  
at Constance, where we got into Baden territory  
again.

*August 18.*—At Zurich; the town crammed  
with English. Supped at table d'hôte. After  
supper a bit of paper was brought to us on which  
was written Mr. Baillie. We rushed down and  
found our friend, not the least altered. . . .  
Determined to stay a day with him.

*August 21.*—Came to Lucerne.

*August 23.*—Set off for Berne. . . . The moment  
we got into the broad streets of Berne, with its  
colonnaded houses, we recognised something  
superior to whatever we had before seen in  
Switzerland, and hailed the capital of the wisest  
Government in Europe. . . .

*August 24.*—Left Berne, and the next day  
arrived at Lausanne. No letter from Byron.

Met young Blomfield, who took us to Gibbon's  
house. Blomfield told us scarcely any one here



1816. thinks of Gibbon. They think nothing but of nobility. Voltaire is not remembered, Rousseau partially; Haller they commemorate as a patrician of the place. . . .

*August 26.*—Set off to Secheron, along the finest road in the world. Went on to Nyon, Coppet, Gentoo. Came over in a boat to the vineyard below the villa Diodati. Went up and found Byron in a delightful house and spot. We had seen the icy crags of Mont Blanc on the other side. Here we had the lines of the Jura, the town, the lake, the flowery banks, etc.

*August 27.*—Walked with Scrope Davies to Geneva. Ugly town.

*August 28.*—Went through Geneva to Ferney. Saw the château of Voltaire. All the avenues in the neighbourhood planted by Voltaire. The country populous now. An old man who showed us the church recollected him. He wore an embroidered coat, and a wig covering his shoulders. He saw him go to Paris for the last time. He was tall and very thin. We were taken by him to the tomb of Père Hugonet, the pastor of Ferney, a great friend of Voltaire's, who died in 1809.

*August 29.*—Byron, S. B. D., Dr. Polidori, and myself, set off in two carriages for Chamouni, with three servants. At starting, our postilion, who was a butcher, was found not to be able to ride. Byron and S. B. D. left the carriage, and left the Doctor and me to our fate. Joseph mounted and rode

some way, until I trusted the butcher again. 1816.  
The demand for horses at Secheron had caused this. We went through a fine country to Bonneville. We entered the Sardinian country in an hour from Diodati, but were not asked for passports by the guard.

Set off again for Sallanches. We continued in the valley of the Arve, which narrowed at every step, and seemed completely shut up by tremendous hills, when we came to the little town of Cluses.

The evening closed in, and I soon got off to walk; the shadows of mountains on both sides towering close above the torrent that roared at my feet were alone discernible. The road had been a little cut up here and there, but was not bad for a good postilion, but our butcher nearly upset the Doctor and the landaulet.

*August 30.*—Set out for Chamouni in three chars-à-bancs. We ran along on flat ground at first, the Arve on our right, noble hills narrowing on each side topped with snow, and part of the chain of Mont Blanc itself swelling into the sky in front. We then began to mount the side of the hills to the left. Passed the black torrent over which the chars-à-bancs were carried. Continued mounting and then descending a little until we came to the village of Servoz. Dined in an orchard near the little inn.

Crossed the Arve, which here runs down a very deep, magnificent woody dell. The whole scenery

1816. in front closed by the snows of the roots and needles of Mont Blanc. Here commenced the wonder of this journey. We wound up a zigzag path for an hour, and then to the left beneath saw the first view of the opening valley of Chamouni, the farms in green and yellow plots in the parish of Les Houches. They looked like Lilliputian habitations.

Every step increased the sublimity of the prospect, the needles of the South and the Goutes, darting their peaks into the clouds and above them. At last we saw the first avalanche of white running down the precipitous dell of the mountain, and then the glacier of Bossons, immense durated masses of blue ice, stretching as it were into the very vegetation of the valley—a miraculous rather than romantic appearance.

Came down into this valley to the village of Les Houches, where our guides took us up a pine-wood to the right of the glacier; rather a painful ascent. We climbed up the side of the ice, and came on the plain, where we had to cross some deep and broad crevasses, in which we heard the ice springs roaring below. Above us were the snow precipices of the mountain rising into the clouds; below the masses, vertically split, of the glacier itself, stretching down to the cornfields.

Going down the other side of the glacier was not a little perilous, especially to Byron, who slid down an ice-ridge. We left this wonder of the world, descending through another pine-wood, and



returned to our carriages, having crossed the glacier in an hour and a quarter, which is a quarter of an hour less than usual. In half an hour the chars-à-bancs arrived at Chamouni. We put up at the Hôtel d'Angleterre. 1816.

ITALY.—It was on this visit to Chamouni that a circumstance occurred which has been so entirely distorted, and represented directly contrary to the fact, that I feel bound to mention it. At an inn on the road the travellers' book was put before us, and Lord Byron, having written his name, pointed out to me the name of Mr. Shelley, with the words atheist and philanthropist written in Greek opposite to it; and observing: "Do you not think I shall do Shelley a service by scratching this out?" he defaced the words with great care. This was the fact—the fiction afterwards printed and published was, that Lord Byron wrote the word "atheist" after his own name in that book; and Mr. Southey, although he does not repeat that absurd story, nevertheless endeavours to make Lord Byron answerable for Mr. Shelley's inscription.

DIARY.—After dinner we went in chars-à-bancs up the valley to the source of the Arveiron, a stream that runs into the Arve from the glacier which extends into the valley from the famous *Mer de glace*, and we scrambled up to the stream under the ice masses, and were warned not



1816. to approach the fountain under the ice itself, as the glaciers are never tranquil. S. B. D. picked his way over the torrent to the fountain, and we all adventurously followed, and put our heads under the overarching ice, and saw the rushing fountains below for a moment.

On coming to this spot we saw the very summit of Mont Blanc, *la bosse de dromadaire*, a white boss just distinguishable from the clouds, and stretching upwards beyond the flight of an eagle. I never saw anything that gave me an idea of intense height before.

*August 31.*—Left Chamouni after visiting the cabinet of a “marchand naturaliste,” which is a sort of trade here; as there are many such cabinets, and all the way from Sallanches to Chamouni there are boys and girls offering their little specimens for sale. Lord Byron bought some crystals, agates, and other cut stones. I bought a collection of the plants of Mont Blanc—about a hundred for eighteen francs.

We saw a burying in front of the little church, and service in the church, in which whilst mass was singing there was a man very coolly perched on a scaffolding white-washing the roof.

A boy told me that from October to May the valley is blocked up with snow, so that horses cannot travel, and men with difficulty cut a way from cottage to cottage; that each family salts a cow and a pig, which, cut in sparing slices, adds a savour to their green soup, and subsists

them for the winter. The women then spend 1816.  
their time in spinning the flax that grows in the valley, the men dress the hemp and attend to the cattle; but as for any other work, there is not more than one month's labour in six. *Eau de vie* is drunk, but little wine.

Left the valley of Chamouni by the ridge of the noble ravine of the Arve, taking many a look back at the majestic snows of Mont Blanc and her craggy needles rushing into the clouds.

On arriving at Servoz we went to look at the monument of the Saxon *literatus*, naturalist, and poet, Enschen, who fell into a crevasse of the glacier of Buet. The monument is pyramidal and plain, recording the event as happening under the magistrature of Buonaparte, Cambacérès, and Le Brun, Consuls of the French Republic—one of the few remaining records of those times. The right side contains advice to travellers to take careful guides, and the left an encomium on the French Republic for her hospitable reception of strangers and her protection of genius in all people.

Set off for home.

*September 1.*—Byron has given me another canto of “Childe Harold” to read. It is very fine in parts, but I don't know whether I like it so much as his first cantos. There is an air of mystery and metaphysics about it, also his “Monody on Sheridan” to be spoken at Drury Lane, which has some very good lines, but is, I think, a little over-

1816 drawn, especially at the beginning. His "Castle of Chillon" I have not read.

*September 3.*—Rowed over to Secheron in Byron's boat, and thence into the staked port of Geneva. Walked home, Dr. P. having missed his appointment at the boat. We dined after waiting for the Doctor and S. B. D., much to Byron's horror.

*September 4.*—Talked with Byron till twelve, about his affairs.

*September 5.*—Called up at half-past three. Walked with S. B. D. through the dark to Geneva. Kept at the gates, which ought to have opened at half-past four, till five; and then waited at the diligence, which ought to have gone at five, till six. So much for Geneva discipline! Took leave of my friend and fellow-traveller, with whom I have not had even a bickering upon a six weeks' tour. Good fortune attend him!

*September 6.*—Read a volume of Madame de Staël's "Corinne," very good but prosy, I think. Also Constant's "Adolphe," which, though short, is tiresome, as perhaps it is meant to be, as it paints the annoyance of an attached woman who will not be deserted.

*September 7.*—Went to Geneva with Byron; read papers at Manget's. Dined later, Byron being at Madame de Staël's.

*September 8.*—Read the other two volumes of the "Antiquary." A very good novel, with the fault of the other two, that is, a laborious display of the art of writing. Both Byron and myself were



much struck with the soliloquy of the fisherman to his boat, in which his son had been drowned. On the whole, I do not like this novel, especially the third volume, so well as the other two, but I like it better than any other of our times. There is no love in it, and absurd womankind do not play too distinguished a part. 1816.

*September 9.*—Went in Byron's boat fishing on the lake—caught nothing. Was told not to fish within the harbour posts.

*September 10.*—Went to Manget's and read in *Chronicle*, for August 21 and 22, Fouché's letter to Wellington, which, it seems, is to serve as a sort of Preface to his Memoirs. It is to me almost convincing. Some of his excuses I had already used for him, and the courage with which he extols the character of Napoleon when at the height of his power, and lays down the faults of the restored dynasty cannot but do a service to his character with every party.

In the evening rowed over the lake with Byron and Dr. P.

*September 11.*—Admiral Tchitchagof<sup>1</sup> called on

<sup>1</sup> Paul Vasilievitch Tchitchagof (1769-1849) was educated in England, and owing to his liberal ideas was imprisoned by the Czar Paul I. Alexander I. on his accession made him an Admiral and Minister of Marine. In 1812 he was placed at the head of the Russian Army in Moldavia, and subsequently became General of the forces which opposed Napoleon in his retreat from Moscow, but, being badly supported, he failed to stop his passage of the Beresina in November 1812. He fell into disgrace and retired to Italy, but in 1834, as he refused to return to Russia, his property was confiscated, and he thereupon became a naturalised British subject, but lived mostly in France. His Memoirs were published in 1855.



1816. Lord Byron to-day, to introduce himself. He made a speech to me about intruding upon solitude, which he had made for Lord Byron.

Tchitchagof said all talent was calculation, and that Buonaparte had more calculation than anybody. Byron was just going to ask him why he, meaning the Russians, let Buonaparte get out of Russia. Now it was the Admiral who did let him get out by not intercepting him at the Beresina with the Moldavian army. Madame Kutusoff said Witgenstein saved Petersburg, my husband saved Russia, and Tchitchagof saved Buonaparte. He came from Lausanne to Geneva to see Ferney, he says.

Walked along the lake side with Byron.

September 12.—Went in hard rain with Byron and P. to Madame de Staël's barony at Coppet. Unfortunately, Rocca, of whom, as Sharp says, she has made an honest man, was ill and created confusion rather, but she, the Baroness, received us very hospitably, and me with particular civility. She had heard of the "Letters" from Playfair and the *Edinburgh*; she is herself writing on Napoleon. She told me she could not believe I had no copy with me, which shows the difference of French and English authors. Her daughter, the Duchess of Broglie, very dingy but sensible, and very good-natured, and more talky than when a girl.

M. de Broglie did not talk much, as English was the language chiefly kept up. The young

Baron speaks perfectly that tongue. Parry 1810.  
Okeden came in, and a man recommended by the Lady Bessborough, also a Miss Randall, formerly a governess of the Duchess, then Bonstetten and Schlegel, who appear inmates of the house. The drawing-room was in confusion, and the dining-room table too small and confused; but this house is more like an English country-house than I had imagined.

We sat down to dinner. I was between Schlegel and the Duke of Broglie: the conversation was lively, and ran chiefly on Sheridan. Schlegel would have his *School for Scandal* had no invention, and talked, I thought, rather dogmatically. He is a little thin man with a largish sharp face, thin grey hair, intelligent-looking, talks English well. Bonstetten dumpy, lively, little old man in a green age of very agreeable converse; not talking English, but apparently understanding it. He had seen or heard of the "Albanian Travels" in the *Bibliothèque Britannique*, now *Bibliothèque Universelle*.

Bonstetten has lent Gray's letters to Lord Byron, and seemed highly proud of them. The originals he gave away some time ago. He said to Polidori and Lord Byron: "I believe that Gray had been killed by Johnson's criticism"—that is by a criticism which recorded his death!

Madame de Staël then told me that Okeden had promised to send her my book, he having it at Lausanne. She said that she recognised several

1816. of her own phrases in "Adolphe," where they were quite out of place: animation in dull, heavy matter, glowworms on dead leaves or dirty paths; I might have said, showing the poverty of the surrounding soil.

We had a very satisfactory day indeed. Okeden invited Byron and me to his house at Lausanne. Madame de Staël told me that she hoped to see me again, and, in short, I must here, for the first time, I believe, record a sort of successful effort at talk.

*September 13.*—Rode to Geneva. Met Lord and Lady Jersey, and stayed too long talking. They had seen my verses at Heidelberg.

French Chamber of Deputies dissolved at last. We shall see whether this is a trick.

*September 14.*—Sharp called to-day. He told me he envied me my youth and my intended tour. Here is the man who said he knew not what it was to be happy until he was fifty! Byron and I went on the water after dinner.

*September 15.*—Helped Dr. Polidori to settle his involved accounts with Lord Byron, and took leave of him. He does not answer to Madame de Staël's definition of a happy man, whose capacities are squared with his inclinations. Took leave of him, poor fellow! He is anything but an amiable man, and has a most unmeasured ambition, as well as inordinate vanity; the true ingredients of misery.

*September 16.*—Byron and I went to Geneva.



Called on Lord Jersey at "Maison Verte." He not at home. 1816.

*September* 17.—Left Geneva, and, passing through Nyon, Morges, and Lausanne, arrived at Vevey on the 18th.

Saw Ludlow's monument in the church at Vevey, of which the epitaph is given in Addison's "Travels." Went on the terrace, where Ludlow may have often contemplated the noble scenery of the lake. I tried to write something, but could only boggle:

It is not cowardice to fly  
From Tyranny's triumphant face;  
It is not banishment to die,  
An exile only from disgrace.

Walked into the pretty market-place, opening upon the banks of the lake. The carriages, etc., got off before us, so we had to walk. Came up with the carriages two-thirds of the way to Clarens. Most delicious village. Put up at a farm-house, and then drove on to Chillon.

*September* 19.—Sent off coachman and Joseph to go round by Bulle with the chars-à-bancs. Byron and I, with Berger, a guide, and a mule, and our two saddle-horses, set off to cross the Dent de Jaman, overlooking the level of the lake. Continued ascending among rich pastures on declivities till we passed Chainy, a small town in the mountains, part of which was lately burnt down. Continued ascending one hour more, till we came to an open and larger range of sloping meadows.



1816. Here we stopped at a *l'Union de Mont d'Avanler*, a post-house in these hills, where are many isolated shepherd huts. These green meadows quite new to me.

Took some fried fish and wine we had brought with us, refreshed our horses for an hour, and marched on.

We came to a torrent, where we were told to pass quickly for fear stones should fall, and thence had a perpetual ascent up stony stairs, and now and then wooden paths. In one hour we were on the top of the pass, a green isthmus of pasture land, with half a dozen scattered *châlets* for cattle, having the ridges of hills on our left, green up to the summit, and the Dent de Jaman on our right, towering above us apparently, nearly perpendicular in this position.

We had here a view into the fathomless valleys of the Saane immediately under us. We determined to ascend the Dent, and went down a dell to our right in order to mount at the best side. Beginning again to ascend, we heard over our heads on an immense craggy summit, as high as the Dent, loud shouting, and, looking up, saw a tall figure on the top of the mountain with a cow, which would have looked unnatural in a picture, as the figures seemed to belong rather to the sky than the earth. This shepherd belonged to the meadows on the other hills.

We came amongst fine cows with bells round their necks, feeding at a great height. Left our

horses and mule in charge of a herdsman, and began to climb up the ascent. It was green for some way, and had pastures for cows, some of which we saw even above a long layer of snow, which we passed, and which the summer had not dissolved. 1816.

I had some scrambling up mossy stones, not very difficult till I got to the summit, although it has rocky precipices on two sides. From the top had a view of the Lake of Geneva, and particularly the north shores, with the Canton of Vaud laid out like a map. Saw the two branches of the Rhône, the mountains of Savoy, and the Alps of the Canton of Berne. Berger got up, but Lord Byron halted twenty yards below. The thin clouds flitted under us like a *coup de canon*, as Berger observed.

Arrived at our horses. Looking up, saw our shepherd still on the opposite alp. He began to play on a pipe, which we heard distinctly, as also his shouts of laughter, which reverberated from every hill. Our guide halloed to him to give the *Ranz des Vaches*, and we heard him soon sing, or rather shout out this tune, which is properly a calling together the cows.

The whole scene gave us quite a new idea of Alpine life. Byron observed that the gloomy green pastures, with the cottages and cows in these heights, were like a dream; something too brilliant and wild for reality. The cows are driven to the hills June 11, and down October 11. Many perish by falling from the rocks.

1816. *September 21.*—Passed through two or three villages in the Simmenthal to the little village of Weissenburg, where we breakfasted. Advancing through a grand pass of gigantic rocks squeezed out of Simmenthal, and saw the château of Wimmis on the feet of the Niesen, the road going over woody acclivities and a green plain, gave us now, as we looked back, a view of the great frozen Alps.

*September 22.*—Sent horses by land and went in boat to Neuhaus. Landed, and drove to Interlaken, Unterseen, and Lauterbrunnen, the whole approach to which—through a woody, rocky, cavern stretching, as it were, to the skies, and closed up in front by the precipices of the ice and snow of the Jungfrau—is not to be described. We admired everything as we advanced into these secluded regions.

*September 23.*—Climbed up the bare green declivity of the Wengern Alp, where there were no herds, but a solitary flock of goats. In two hours we were just opposite the majestic Jungfrau and the two Eigers. The sun glazed the conical point of the silver tooth, a peak rising a little to the right, below the summit of the Jungfrau. Then the white cone of the Wetterhorn rose upon us as we mounted higher up the slope of the Wengern Alp, and looked down upon Grindelwald.

We took the bridles off the horses, and put them to feed. Byron and I then ascended to the



summit called Malinetha. We were fifty minutes getting up, and when we arrived the valley of Lauterbrunnen, and the sides of the Jungfrau and Eigers were enveloped in clouds, which dashed up like waves of foam from the measureless crater and gulphs below, and made the depths appear more hideous. The two Eigers were soon clear, the Grindelwald was a sunny tract beneath, where frequent black cottages looked like scattered flocks of goats. We lay down a short time contemplating this glorious scene, and wrote our names on a bit of paper, which we hid under a small stone near a blue flower. Here one's spirits seemed lighter, one's head more clear. 1816.

As we descended we heard avalanches echoing down the great Alps beside us, but could not catch a sight of the fall.

After dining we set out for the upper glacier. It was almost dark before we reached the foot of this frozen sea, tumbling from between the Mittenberg and Wetterhorn Alps in vast billows over our heads.

We went down to the ice, then returned in the dark. The sky was dotted with stars, the valley with cottage lights, and now and then a faint flash of lightning added to the *strangeness* of the scene.

*September 24.*—Set out from Lauterbrunnen. We ascended an easy road up the Bach Alp and Buss Alp, till we got to the ridge of the Scheideck—the latter part of the journey in cold vapour, which



1816. showed us but partial views of the Alps. Came in sight of the great Rose glacier, suspended like a sea at a vast height, and lost in the masses of snow which crown the tops of these great alps. Crossed the Reichenbach, and soon after came upon the noble valley of Hasli, with its green peopled mountains beyond.

We were disappointed by the fall of Reichenbach, which is, after all, seen best from the path. Went from Hasli Baths in the rain, and travelled by the side of the Aar, which we crossed at the mouth of the valley to Brienz.

After dinner, four singers were introduced by Joseph and sung a *Ranz des Vaches*, not Croch's, and other songs in parts, and generally standing facing in a circle. A fiddle afterwards struck up below, and on going down we found Joseph capering an Allemand with shoes and stockings off, greatly to his own delight, and really well. The more gentlemanly Berger joined afterwards in waltzing, which did also the farmers and boors, with boots and pipes, and in such a manner as might shame a ball-room in England.

*September 25.*—Went to Interlaken in a boat rowed by one man and three women, and landed near a covered bridge. Byron dined at the Interlaken Inn. Hired char-à-banc for Neuhaus, arriving at which we set off with our old boatman for Thun.

*September 26.*—We went on philosophising on ill- and good-luck to Berne. Byron lost his

cane. Put up at the Falcon, and whilst Byron 1816.  
dined I walked about. Arrived at Friburg about  
nine o'clock.

*September 27.*—Passed the village of Bafoul, where the people would have burnt Comte, the ventriloquist, if an old soldier had not saved him. Had a charming evening ride to Yverdun.

*September 28.*—Went through a beautiful open country of vineyards, corn grounds, and woody dells, to Orbe. Passed Lassara, coming by a village called the middle of the world.

Byron dined at a wretched inn at Correnay. I walked out and found a sloping green field, looking upon a deep, woody dell, in which runs the Orbe. In short, one of the most lovely prospects of Switzerland. I lay down in the sun enjoying myself most entirely, and dared to write down in my pocket-book that I was happy.

We were much delighted with the position of the town of Aubonne, and wound up the hill to the town instead of going on to Rolle.

We thought ourselves going to a solitary place, out of reach of travellers, but we found the Duchess of Cleveland had half crammed the inn, and after we were lodged, came our ever-recurring friends, the Clintons, who could not get room. Byron and I walked to the terrace, which gave us the finest view we had ever seen of the Lake of Geneva, and if clear, does show from one end to

1816. the other of it. The moon rose over the Savoy Alps as we were contemplating the prospect.

Here Tavernier had lived, and said he had never seen anything comparable to it but Erivan.

*September 29.*—Went on to Geneva, and arrived at Diodati by four o'clock, having had only four hours' rain from the day we set out. Thus finished what we accounted a very prosperous and beautiful tour.

NOTE.—Lord Byron wrote the following at the conclusion of this tour :

“In the weather for this tour (of thirteen days) I have been very fortunate—fortunate in a companion (Mr. H.)—fortunate in our prospects, and exempt from even the little petty accidents and delays which often render journeys in a less wild country disappointing. I was disposed to be pleased. I am a lover of nature and an admirer of beauty. I can bear fatigue and welcome privation, and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. But in all this the recollection of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more home desolation, which must accompany me through life, have preyed upon me here; and neither the music of the shepherd, the crashing of the avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the glacier, the forest, nor the cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty, and the power, and the glory, around, above, and beneath me.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph only has been published, and is reproduced here from Moore's Life.



October 1.—Dine at Coppet. Present, amongst 1816.  
others, the Prince of Mecklenburgh and the  
Duchess of Ragusa, Bonstetten, Schlegel, the  
two Roccas, and many others.

The table was crammed. Introduced by  
Madame de Staël to Rocca as an admirer of his  
“Memoirs,” which I am. He said many handsome  
things to me of the “Letters from Paris.” Said  
they were extremely impartial, that Buonaparte  
was a *bon homme* who did not let anything stand  
in the way of any object, and that my description  
of him was most exact. Rocca a very amiable  
man, talking freely about his own and other  
persons’ composition *à la manière étrangère*.  
Nothing was said remarkable.

I sat next to Miss Randall, who told me that in  
the time of Napoleon the Duchess of Ragusa  
would not be seen in a house where Madame de  
Staël was, and used particularly to object to meet  
her. Schlegel and Madame de Staël sparred at  
dinner *selon leur usage*.

After dinner, when the great party was gone,  
Madame de Staël said, “There, now they are all  
gone, now we can talk freely. Ain’t I a good  
person to show you princes and duchesses, etc.?”

We then began to *causer*. She would not let  
Rocca talk to me too much on account of his  
chest, which is affected by his wounds.

Corinne said nothing but civilities. Her  
Duchess daughter was very kind, would carve  
the beef at dinner. She seemed much attached to



1816. the Duke, and ran out of the room when the post was announced from Paris. I promised Schlegel to-day a copy of my "Travels." A Mr. Schmidt told me he had seen honourable mention made of them in the *Göttingen Journal*. Schlegel talked to me of Greek geography.

Madame de Staël asked us to dine the next Thursday, and we went away. Took boat at Genthod and got to Diodati.

October 3.—Dined to-day at Coppet. Nobody there but Schlegel, Bonstetten, Rocca, the Duchess, Miss Randall, and ourselves.

Schlegel showed me a translation in German of the "Gulistan," made in 16——. He and Madame de Staël sparred at dinner, and afterwards Schlegel showed himself dreadfully national, and would not permit her to tell a story even of Neipperg, being the Empress Marie Louisa's lover.

Madame de Staël mentioned that Marie Louisa was angry with the Bolognese for crying out "*Viva l'infelice sposa*," and said that the time she spent with Napoleon was the most miserable of her life. We had a deal of smart talking after dinner. I told Madame de Staël that her phrases in "Adolphe" were "*comme les vers luisants sur des feuilles mortes: dont la lumière ne sert qu'à montrer la sécheresse des alentours*."

She turned to Bonstetten: "*Charmant, n'est-ce pas?*" She was in high good-humour, begged us to stay for her in Italy and she would go to Greece with us. Told me my letters had affected

her very much. She wrote commendatory letter for Byron and added my name to Monsignore Brême at Milan. 1816.

Rocca told me that Bernadotte had been foretold that he should have a crown, and that he knew a French marshal who believes in the omens of ravens, etc., although equally incredulous as to God and the devil.

Rocca is to write memoirs of the wars since the Revolution. He told me that the French so completely expected the army under Sir John Moore to retreat by Lisbon that every preparation was made in that quarter. The Spanish commissioners had also provided for the English on that side.

We took an affectionate leave of Madame de Staël, who lent me Chateaubriand's mad book, and carried Bonstetten with us to Genthod.

In the way he told us anecdotes of Gray and Voltaire. Of Gray he said he had met him by accident in London. Gray said, "You can do better than be a man of fashion; come to Cambridge with me." They went together next day. Gray was extremely respected, but his political reputation was higher now than then. He had the *esprit gai* and the *humeur triste*. He was plotting lectures on English history. When asked why he did not do something more, he answered by a sigh.

Bonstetten said Voltaire was unlike any human being; he never spoke without saying something

1816. quite in his own way, if it were only, "Give me my slippers." He kept the whole country in a tremor, yet he was so kind that in twenty years his secretary never had an unkind word from him, and never was requested to do anything extraordinary, such as getting up in the night, without some regret being expressed. This he told to Bonstetten.

The play at Ferney was most exquisite. They played Molière sometimes, with additions from Voltaire, relative to Fréron and others, which made the audience die of laughing.

We took leave of this merry, amiable old man, crossed the lake and got to Diodati late.

*October 4.*—Went to Geneva, called on Rossi. Saw Madame de Staël, who shook hands and said, "God bless you, stay for me in Italy."

Sat up late writing letter to Madame de Staël on Chateaubriand's book, which is the most malicious, violent, mischievous and cunning I ever read.<sup>1</sup>

*October 5.*—Set off with Lord Byron, he having his two carriages and I horses. Left Diodati, after taking a farewell view of the lake.

"ITALY."—From Thonon we went to La Ripaille, where we saw one of the living wrecks of the Revolution. The old inhabitants of this celebrated retreat, the monks, were expelled by the French, and the extensive but ruined mansion, having been

<sup>1</sup> "Génie du Christianisme," or "Buonaparte et les Bourbons."



thrice sold, was at last tenanted by General Duppa. 1816.  
The General was present when we entered the premises—a fine, tall, pleasing-looking person, dressed like a farmer. His wife was killing fowls in the courtyard. “Formerly,” said the General, “I commanded divisions, now I command nobody but my wife; I have no steward, and am my own servant.” He added that he had lost 75,000 livres of annual income by French politics, and was now on the point of losing 4,000 more because he did not choose to be naturalised in France. He informed us that he had served under Louis XVI., but said nothing of his other commander-in-chief, Napoleon. An Englishman who should be equally communicative with one whom he had never seen before, and was never likely to see again, would be thought mad.

At La Ripaille the church was turned into a barn, the towers, all but two, were razed, and a garden had been planted on the embanked buttresses. Over the front gate were still seen the arms of the Prince of Savoy, surmounted by that papal crown which he resigned for this sensual seclusion. The French, by an easy conversion, had made the tiara look like a cap of liberty.

DIARY.—Coming back we went another way by the high road. The moon rose over the point of the Dent de Jaman, and seemed rolling slowly, or climbing, as the song says, the side of the mountain, till it rested for a minute upon the



1816. top, before it had ascended into the sky. It was near the full, and most beautiful.

*October 6.*—Passed the torrent of Dranse, Evian, thence went by the water's edge on Napoleon's noble road, of what he called the department of the Simplon; approaching the hamlet of Meillerie the rocks and woods, and all the magnificence of that scenery which Rousseau found so savage in winter, but which seemed to us anything but savage, then came down close upon us. The souvenirs did not appear to us at all destroyed by the road, or if they did, we agreed with Rocca, that "*La route vaut bien les souvenirs.*" Onwards to St. Gingolph the scenery appeared more glorious, the rocks higher and more impending. St. Preux<sup>1</sup> evidently took this part of the shore, whence he might see Clarens, and chose Meillerie as a well-sounding name. Arrived at St. Gingolph by twelve, and stopped there for Byron to eat.

Set off to St. Maurice—scenery most beautiful. As we advanced we had a view of the glacier and the Dent du Midi. There is scarcely room for the little town of St. Maurice, which we thought must be let into the perpendicular rocks running down to the bank of the river.

After I had gone to my room at the inn, Byron called me out to look at the rocks and the church and the snow-tops of the Dent du Midi, sleeping in

<sup>1</sup> In Rousseau's "*Nouvelle Héloïse*" St. Preux and Mme. Wolmar took shelter here during a storm.

the moonlight, and apparently close to us, like a scene in a theatre. 1816.

*October 7.*—Going along the Valais came to the famous waterfall of the Pisse Vache, whose name the delicate Matthison will not pronounce. It is certainly the finest fall I have seen, the body of water greater than the Staubbach, the spray falling in an arch, as Fletcher said, “like old Mr. Becher’s wig” in the air above us, and the whole stream pouring into a pool of rocks at our feet, and forming a rainbow, which in the morning stretches across the whole valley of the Rhône.

Came to the little town of Martigny, at the point where the valley turns abruptly to the eastward, and where the Val de Dranse joins the Valais from the side of Mont Blanc. The snowy summits of part of St. Bernard are seen from this point.

Arrived at Sion, where we had good beds and a decent dinner. The waiter told us a story of a bear and man who met in the mountains, fairly wrestled, fell over a precipice, the bear being undermost was killed, the man above, and was saved. He is alive yet.

*October 8.*—From Sion went on to Turtmann. The valley here up to Sierre is much richer both in cultivation and scenery than on the other sides, either up or down the Rhône. It is swelled into monticles of calcareous stone, some quite wooded, others only partially, some of them crowned with

1816. old castles. The banks or rather alps on both sides are very beautiful and majestic: high woods, intermingled meadows, white villages and rocks towering above all, here and there tinged with snow.

Opposite to Leuk from a bridge over a torrent, there is a most magnificent view of a rocky cleft in an alp of stone. Here a torrent has given a curious appearance to a bed of sand and white stone sloping down to the Rhône, and looking like the effects of fire.

We went from Visp to Brieg. The moon, being up over the glaciers of the Ganterhorn, showed us a wild country.

*October 9.*—Six fresh horses were put to Byron's carriage, three to his calash, and two to mine.

We set off to cross the Alps. Went for the first mile and a half of ascent by a cross road which joins the Simplon-Napoleon road. Getting into this noble road, we found it in every way equal to its fame, and improving upon us as we ascended. It was dusty, like a great turnpike road. In some places it is flanked by conical stone posts, at others by a low wall, and at others large brown posts and rails, which give it the air of a carriage way through an English park winding through noble woods.

In about two hours' ascent we mounted, and wound out of the view of the Valais, and came amongst pine hills, and rifted rocks, looking down upon vast depths strewn with fallen trees and frag-



ments of rocks and glittering with torrents. The 1816.  
snowy peak of the Ganter rose upon us to the left.  
We then went rather down-hill to the fine bridge  
of Roman work over the two torrents.

Winding up-hill again we came to the Refuge  
No. III., where two carriages were waiting be-  
longing to two English and an Italian Marquis  
with his tutor Abate. We had fresh milk, bread-  
and-cheese, and some of Fletcher's spared cham-  
pagne at the refuge door.

Byron and I walked on at two o'clock. In an  
hour from the third refuge mounted to the fourth,  
whence was the finest view I had yet seen; the  
snowy Simplon in front, the brown hill of the  
barrier topped or streaked with snow; contrasted  
with it the pine-forested cone towering to the  
right, with snowy ridges a little farther beyond,  
and the bright pine dells down to a vast depth  
buried in the sunshine of the declining day.

All was most magnificent, and I sat down to  
record it on the spot. I continued to walk, and  
passed the fifth refuge, in a wild country above  
the trees, with ice and snow near it under the  
glacier. Wrote a few pencil lines on a paper for  
a friend to find. Passed a torrent, over which,  
close to the road, was a mass of frozen snow  
arched by the stream, and arrived shortly after  
at the barrier or new spital, where the Simplon  
toll of six francs a horse is paid. Springhetti  
was waiting to change horses.

Set off again, and descended through blasted



1816. hills of rock and thinly scattered pine, the snows of the Simplon above and dells of fir below. Crossed a desolate village, and arrived at Simplon. Three Athenians met there—Lord Byron, myself, and a Genevese.

*October 10.*—We were off at seven. Went a quarter of an hour down the road into the hills till we came to where a torrent, Querna, flowed from a great glacier called the Lavia, which we saw glittering in the sun. Went along a dreary stone valley in the bowels of these mountains to some stone châteaux, called Gsteig, where another torrent, the Kronbach, falls into the Querna. We kept on the left bank of this stream flowing through the most savage vale of stones, closed up nearly by alps of stone on each side—far more terrific than the other ascent. We went along occasionally at a trot.

Passed a gallery eighty paces long, near Gsteig, then went through the great gallery with three openings from above—200 paces long. We stopped here and threw a great stone into the roaring Veniola deep below.

Walked on through these wild scenes. In the bed of the Veniola beneath saw frozen snow avalanches in the midst of loose masses of rock—above, about, and underneath, which looked as if the world was falling to pieces.

Entered Piedmont, then came to Isella, a little village, where we were questioned by the douaniers, but soon suffered to pass. After leaving

the last of the galleries we went by two villages, where, for the first time, we saw ripe grapes on trellice-work vineyards. 1816.

At the bridge of Crevola the wonders of the Simplon road close, but in return you burst upon the fine vale of Domo d'Ossola, green with meadows, populous with villages, whose white tall churches dot the sides of the woody hills which bound the plain.

At a little past three set off for Ornavasso, ten miles. The road was perfect. At the fine bridge of Ponte Massone we saw boats coming up with full sail from Lago Maggiore, and dragged by horses over the shallows.

By six o'clock we arrived at our town of Ornavasso. Being in Italy, we took great precautions about luggage, etc. Berger slept in Byron's carriage, the dogs were chained under our chaises, our pistols well-primed in our rooms, and all other warlike preparations made.

*October 11.*—Before quitting this place we made every arrangement for battle. Pistols were reprimed, swords got ready, Byron's two carbines put into my calash with Joseph. We had four brace of pistols in our carriage, two swords, two sword-sticks, and Byron's dagger. We furnished Springhetti with a brace of pistols, and my position—so we had armed men.

Our histories of the late Sesto robbery, and Springhetti's advice to embark on the lake to-day made us think we might have occasion for

1816. all our arms, and as much of our courage as might be forthcoming.

We were a little silent, and looked about us on each side of the road. Springhetti did the same. Yet we knew the Jerseys and the Cowpers had just passed safely; but they had luck, and we might have none. I put my napoleons in a secret drawer, which, considering we had resolved to fight, was useless.

We had travelled three-quarters of an hour when we saw a man proceed from some old walls of a vineyard, and then go in again. We took out our pistols, looked at the priming, and went on. Some children made us suspect we might not yet be called upon to use our arms; but passing this spot we saw five or six men running after our last carriage. We stopped, holloaed out, and our second coachman saying something about a gun, we were not relieved until we found these fellows were boatmen running to get a fare from us. We did not know we were so close to the Lago Maggiore, coming on which we were at once at ease again.

We debated some time whether it would be magnanimous to leave our baggage and go by water; but being assured that the thieves were not on this side of Sesto, got into a boat with six men, who engaged to carry us to the Borromean Islands, and down the lake to Arona. We were pulled swiftly along to Isola Madre.

On our way we agreed that the lake was quite



Italian, that the breeze was softer, the clouds 1816.  
thrown farther back than in the north, the sky  
more blue, the houses more white, the groves more  
green, the water seemed of the colour of the  
Mediterranean. We saw on the opposite bank  
the large town of Pallanza, where Napoleon kept  
his State prisoners, and many other white villages  
and villas in the slopes of the hills and banks of  
the lake, the upper sinuosities of which, running  
amongst mountains, reminded us of the Lake of  
Lucerne.

Landing at Isola Madre, we went up some  
terraces, where were walls covered with oranges  
and lemons, and walked into the gardens of fine  
foreign trees, of which the finest are some cypresses.  
Isola Madre gives a beautiful prospect of the lake  
and surrounding opposite mountains of Switzerland.

Everything in this Island is totally different  
from all we have seen on the other side of the  
Alps, particularly the view of the colonnades,  
porticoes, and terraces of Isola Bella, to which we  
rowed on leaving Isola Madre.

A man showed us the room in which Buona-  
parte slept when at Isola Bella. He said Buona-  
parte spoke to him and asked him why the place  
was neglected. He said the times were hard, the  
contributions vexatious. "Ay," said Buonaparte,  
"everybody says the same thing." This apothegm  
he accompanied with a grimace, which I have  
always found accompanies his speeches to indi-  
viduals.

1816. We were also shown the gardens, which are in the Dutch taste—beds of cockle-shells, etc. They contain, however, the largest laurel trees in the world. On the bark of one, two days before the battle of Marengo, Napoleon scratched with a knife the word, *BATTAGLIA*. I discerned the B, and a bit of the first A, and tops of the T's; but a rascally Austrian officer last year had slashed it over with his sword.

We left the island and got into our boat to go to Arona. Many boats were sailing up the lake, before the wind, as if without a man in them, the boatmen being asleep.

I discovered at a great distance the colossal statue of St. Carlo in bronze, seventy feet high, which rises with very majestic effect from a woody knoll in front of a summit on which are the ruins of an old castle looking towards Arona. The white houses of the towns on the shore, with their porticoes, galleries, colonnades, and coloured frescoes, answered our expectations of the change we thought we should find.

We dined at Arona, and then set out for Sesto. We went through a woody country, secure in our guard, in spite of a man whom Fletcher saw look from behind a tree, and in an hour came to the mouth of the Ticino, where it flows into the lake. Over this we were ferried on a *pont volant*. Arrived at the great uncomfortable inn of this idle town, where every child, Springhetti said, is a robber born. The chief of the police

offered as many armed men as I liked for the next morning. 1816.

Went to bed after reading and laughing at the first volume of Rousseau's "Confessions," and his "Madame Vercellis." Some of his confessions were so gross the publishers would not print them.

*October 12.*—Byron got up at four, I at six; put a gendarme with a musket on each carriage, and being all primed ourselves, set out for this dangerous passage. The country at first did look most propitious to robbing. We said little, but looked through the bushes and behind the vineyard walls as we trotted slowly on.

We had to go up an acclivity through a wood of some continuance, and only met one or two peasants on the whole way. Coming out of a wood on a brushwood heath where four ways met, Springhetti turned round and said, pointing with his whip, "There the carriages were stopped." He wisely said nothing until we had passed. We reached the small town of Somna. Beyond this there seemed no danger, for we met many peasants. We came to Gallarate, where the folks in the street stared at our gendarmes, who were still perched up, and who Springhetti's advice made us change for twenty horsemen.

At Castellanza we dismissed our swordsmen, and set out for Milan. All we had heard of the plains of Lombardy certainly was not realised here; nothing could be more dreary. We both fell asleep, and did not begin to think much of



1816. the capital of Italy until within half an hour of it.

We met a few carts and carriages, but nothing looked like the entrance of a city containing 130,000 inhabitants. We drove round into the city by a gate, where they took our passports, and we proceeded through dirty, narrow streets until we came to the square of the Cathedral and the Government House, which struck us to be worthy of a great city. We were, however, much disappointed in being driven to an hotel, l'ancien Hôtel de St. Marco, where we were shown into very dirty rooms indeed, and my spleen was direfully moved. We resolved upon moving with all possible speed. I dined, Byron had tea, and we went half grumbling to bed.

MILAN. *October 13.*—Dr. Polidori called. He told us he had a prosperous journey on foot across the Alps. We determined to go to the play to-night. Magnificent house—the whole theatre larger than any in London.

Whilst in our box, after Polidori and Carnuff, the Greek came in, Monsignore Lodovico de Brême,<sup>1</sup> an Abate, one of Napoleon's almoners for the Kingdom of Italy, whence his title. The son of a noble Piedmontese family, destined for the Church, who has been offered two bishoprics by Napoleon and one by these people, but wishes

<sup>1</sup> Louis Arborio Gattinara, Abbé de Brême (1781–1820), was born in Turin and consecrated priest; at the age of twenty-two he became Abbé of Caluso. He was appointed almoner to Eugène Beauharnais and Councillor of State. After 1814 he devoted himself to literature,

rather to unfrock himself than to put on the mitre. He is a young man about thirty, wears his dark hair combed upright, which gives him a wildness of expression not unlike that of Alfieri. He is, on the whole, one of the most attractive men I ever saw. He gave Lord Byron a most warm reception, and as Madame de Staël had introduced me to him in her letter in favourable terms, was pointedly civil to me. He spoke with a certain degree of point on every subject, delivering his apothegms and ironies in the gravest tone and air, which made him quite irresistible. 1810.

Monsignore talked to us of Italian literature. He said Alfieri, when young, had very fine long hair, which he wore *à l'Apollon*; his manner in company was never to speak, but his silence was most eloquent; he never sat down. One day at the Princess Carignan's, of the royal blood of Sardinia, he was leaning on a marble slab amidst a service of china, which he had done often without danger. His hair got entangled, and he broke a cup. Madame Carignan was much annoyed, and said, "You had better have broke the whole set." On which Alfieri at once dashed all the china on the floor.

Alfieri thought he should have lived till seventy; he intended to have finished his life in London.

We were delighted with the ballet, which was magnificently got up and well danced.

October 14.—In the morning Lord Byron,

1816. Polidori, and I, went in a carriage to the Ambrosian Library, where we saw the gallery of pictures.

From this place we went to the Cathedral, and there saw the pictures that were hung up in the church where Napoleon was crowned. They sent for tapestry to all the neighbouring cities.

After dinner Byron and I had a visit from Monsignore Brême, who amused us at this and a subsequent meeting, with some most ridiculous stories of Schlegel and Madame de Staël.

Madame de Staël was one day saying that she was glad she published her "*Allemagne*" some time ago; if she had done so now it would have been too late. Nobody cares about Germany—literature was on the decline. "*Quoi, Madame, vous osez dire ça du pays de Frederick Schlegel devant William Schlegel!*" "*Ah,*" said Madame de Staël, throwing herself back in her chair, "*comme la vanité est bête!*"

Schlegel was one day talking English to Miss Randall. Brême said, "It seems to me that the English, for a man that does not understand it, is rather a hard language." Schlegel went up to Madame de Staël, and said, "I see, Madame, that there is a conspiracy in your house against me; everybody is resolved to offend me." Madame de Staël was writing; she threw down her pen: "*Dites-moi donc, M. de Brême, qu'avez-vous fait pour offenser M. Schlegel?*" Brême explained, but



in vain. He said that he did not know that 1816.  
Schlegel was hired defender of all nations.

"Sir," said Schlegel. "any one could see you meant to laugh at my way of pronouncing English."

Schlegel is an excessive adulator of the great, and especially of German grandeur. He was shocked that Madame de Staël did not show more alarm at the Prince of Mecklenburgh. "Madame," said he, "*ne connaissez-vous pas que c'est un Prince Mecklenburgh Schwerin ?*"

He would not allow Canova any merit. "Pray," said Brême, "have you seen his group of Filial Piety?" Schlegel rose up, and coming close to Brême, said, "*Avez-vous vu mon buste par Tieck ?*" He added it was in vain to tell him that there was no imagination in the bust, but a *vérité affreuse*, etc.

Schlegel said that Locke was unsatisfactory, that he did not account for the phenomena of the human mind. Brême said he accounted for it as well as reason would allow; "*La raison, je me moque de la raison.*" "*Quoi,*" said Brême, "*voulez-vous donc que les hommes doivent se frotter au professeur Schlegel pour s'enfuir de la vérité ?*" "*Quoi,*" exclaimed Schlegel, rising; "*du sarcasme,*" and rapping the table, stalked out of the room.

Rocca and Brême once calculated that he drew 36,000 francs a year from Madame de Staël—6,000 in money.

1816. Schlegel has a habit of walking in with some great book, and throwing it down with a great noise; also of leaving Oriental books, and when he saw anybody turning over the pages, to go up to him and say, "What, sir, don't you know that Oriental books always begin by the end?" Brême got an Armenian book and took him in. Schlegel made the same remark, only saying, "It is odd this work begins with 'finis.'" Brême exposed him!

Schlegel wanted Madame de Staël to marry him. He is now in a sort of treaty with a lady, and it is probable will get Madame de Staël to receive her in her house.

I should not forget that Brême, talking with me, said the Italians were foolish and unjust towards Napoleon. They heard the cry of his being a tyrant in France and a usurper in Spain. They adopted the same sentiments in Italy, forgetting that it was very possible for him to be very serviceable in one country, and very pernicious in another. Napoleon had certainly taught the Milanese that they could do something, and the conscription itself was not without its advantage. The mass was stagnant, he raised it up, put it in motion by the extreme activity of his Government, and taught the Italians what it was to see and feel and act in an active Government, which they had never had before.

Indeed, a Colonel Fitzgerald, who has been a long time in this country, tells me that there were

18,000 *employés* in Milan alone. The habit of activity to whatever end was new and confined to the Lombards. 1813.

October 15.—Went this morning to the Ambrosian Library, and saw the autograph letters of Lucrezia Borgia to Pietro Bembo. They seem full of regard, or perhaps more.

There are some Spanish verses of hers also. A long lock of her bright yellow hair is preserved. Byron tried to get a copy of the letter, and was half promised as much, but he failed. He has taken the hair, however, for which he says he will have this motto :

And beauty draws us by a single hair.

(*Rape of the Lock.*)

After this we went to the Brera institution and saw the gallery of pictures, which delighted us very much.

Brême came in the evening and talked most amusingly, as usual. He told us that Beccaria did his utmost to hang his servant for stealing his snuff-box. He mentioned how Monti's daughter and Mustoxidi, the Greek, made a sentimental love, which was the talk of all Milan. They wrote fine letters.

Byron said he could no more be a dogmatist than he could be an atheist. His *sens intime* of a divinity, although he could not account for it, was as certain a proof to him that there was a cause for it as the influence upon the compass was



1816. a sign there was some cause for the direction of the magnetical needle to the pole.

*October 16.*—This night I wrote a letter for Polidori, who is going to try to make himself physician to the Princess of Wales. Poor thing, she must be mad. The Princess of Wales at an entertainment she gave, where was Count Borromeo, had an ass brought in to table, caressed it before the company and crowned it with roses. She calls her palace the Villa d'Este. She has ruined herself with the Italians.

*October 17.*—Went to the Casa Roma to dine with Mons. de Brême, who lives in that large palace with his brother, the Marquis. We found a large party of young men, some of whom we knew there, and Lord Byron, as well as myself, most gallantly received. Indeed, the enthusiasm with which my poetical friend meets is something extraordinary.

Mirabeau, the banker here, came with his letters, merely to see *le célèbre poète*, and Brême says he thinks he is more like Petrarch than any other writer.

His encomiums to myself would make me blush in England, but here only serve to make me fancy that I shall be sure of a favourable and fair reception, and of having a just interpretation put upon what I say or do. This gives a facility of manner which I never remember to have before recognised, and makes me, as yet, like this place better than any other I have ever seen.

A persuasion that I am of the Liberal English and, more than all, have a hatred of the Congress Castlereagh system, gives me a willing audience in this place, which is not elsewhere found, at least I have not found it.

There was a M. de Beyle, one of Napoleon's secretaries. Unfortunately, I had hardly a word with him. Colonel Finch was there, who takes snuff and has been a long time abroad, and has a character for understanding Italian literature, but whom I found a very tiresome man, telling me his feelings, which are selfish; and his information, which is confused. However, he is a Democrat, though of a noble family, as he told me, and convinced that the Congress is a conspiracy against the liberties of mankind. He told me he should go back to England, when one of his own family, the misery of his existence, should die. He said, "Mr. Hobhouse, I regret I am not in England now, to read your 'Travels.'" I was bowing and thanking when he said, "Nay, I do not say I should like them."

Silvio Pellico, author of "*Francesca da Rimini*," was there, although I did not hear him say a word; also an Italian, who has translated Sterne. Monti was expected, but was not there when we sat down.

It was a very noble dinner in the true style, Byron and I on each side of Brême, who continued saying agreeable things and recommending his dishes.

1816. In the middle of dinner Monsignore got up and brought in II Cavaliere Monti, and introduced him to Byron and to me. He is very deaf of his left ear; his face is very expressive. I looked at this man with a sort of blind admiration, as having read of his translation of Homer in the "Hermes Logios," and of his being the first poet of the day in Italy. There is certainly something very impressive and expressive in his whole appearance. He said nothing during dinner that I can recollect.

We got up very soon after dinner and went into another room. Then talking commenced, and Monti had a violent harangue against everybody in the room. He was for imitating Homer, and the ancient originality was impossible; nothing was left for the moderns but following the old models. He quoted Shakespeare in proof. We all thought very much to the contrary. Brême told me he was like a child in argument. "We revere him here," he said, "like our papa." He is the best proof against his own theory, for even when writing on mythological subjects he is quite new and modern. The whole party seemed to delight in making him angry, and he poured forth torrents of dogmas; when at last he had finished he talked quietly to Lord Byron.

We remarked that Milton was a great reader of the Italians, and that he had been said to have stolen his "Paradise Lost" from them. Monti said there was not the least trace of it, and that



it was like saying the artist who made the Venus was a thief because he had picked up the clay from somewhere. He then said he liked the cannons in heaven, and the angels flinging hills at each other. Here we saw what he meant, and broke up the conference with a laugh. 1816.

We went to the theatre, Brême with us. By the way, he said Monti was no more the Monti of former times: "*Je le révère comme son portrait*," said Brême, which I thought beautifully said. He talked with enthusiasm of Monti's poetry, and repeated part of his ode on the death of Louis XVI., which, he said, was enough to make a nation revolt.

Brême said that Monti's real feeling was towards liberty, but that his extreme weakness made him the flatterer of every successive power. He could withstand nothing.

After some little time Monti and Count Perticari, his son-in-law, came into the box. Monti sat next to me; we had a deal of political talk. I found him in the same strain as all; he lamented that he was too old to hope to see a change. He should not live once more to sing the liberties of Italy. I told him now was the time for him to sing and rouse his countrymen. "Ah," said he, "it would be *vox clamantis in deserto*."

When Monti rose to go away, we all rose with him. I observed my friend had kept his eye upon him a good deal, and more than once pressed him

1316. to take his front seat. Certainly the respect due to great eminence in literature, especially poetry, is most agreeably helped out by his appearance and manner. Lord Byron says he is like a picture of Garrick.

*October 18.*—This morning Colonel Fitzgerald called, and showed us the very double of Foote's Cadwalader. He told us that Eugene Beauharnais was one of the richest individuals in Europe.

He also told us that when Napoleon first came to Milan, he sent for all the young men and told them he would make . . . of them—he would make them soldiers. He added that he would take them in six months to the Tower of London. This he said on a balcony of a house opposite the Casa Castiglione, and within hearing of one of the young Castigliones, who entered into the army and was drowned.

It was before he went to Egypt, that Madame Castiglione, seeing the manner in which he then treated his officers, said, "That man will never be content with being General in Chief."

*October 19.*—Colonel Fitzgerald called. Told anecdotes of the Princess of Wales; how she made Keppel Craven get up and show his beef-eater's uniform to him and James Grattan; how she was found eating beef steaks and drinking porter; how she wanted to have a fête given her in the Champ de Mars; and how, when she was present at one given at the Arena on the Emperor's name-day, all the quality of Milan left the place

where she sat down, on account of her having asked women of bad character to her ball. 1816.

She desired James Grattan to give her love to his father, and tell him she was spending her £35,000 a year on her own countrymen.

Polidori has not been preferred.

Byron and I went to the Ambrosian Library and bought Mai's books for ninety-seven francs; then to the Brera Gallery—admired the Hagar again. Went after to the Casa Castiglione, where we were introduced to sundry, very inferior to Brême. Madame la Marquise exceedingly old indeed, and vastly polite and apparently sensible.

October 20.—We gave Acerbi a sketch of our reviewing system and its dispersion of literature. He was thunderstruck, especially when he heard of £800 per annum being given to the editors of the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*. 16

October 21.—In the morning Monti called with Silvio Pellico, the author of "Francesca da Rimini," and Borsieri. Monti and the others talked loudly in praise of Shakespeare. Monti said he was a great comic writer. He said there were three great geniuses since the world began: Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. They had no tolerable translation in verse of Shakespeare—none so good as the French prose. Monti mentioned that when he was young Dante was out of fashion.

We went to Brême's box with him and Colonel Finch. Brême told us some ridiculous stories of Schlegel, particularly of his being angry that



1816. his trunk was not carried up into his room as soon as Madame de Broglie's and Madame de Staël's; and when Madame de Staël said, "Well, I will go and see about it," actually let her go.

Schlegel says that Dante had a divine spirit, *i.e.* really supernatural.

Brême told us to-night, in presence of Colonel Finch, that Castlereagh had said to the Italian deputy who asked him for a Constitution for Italy, "What is a Constitution good for?" "Why," said the Italian, "the English have found it some good." "Pooh," answered my Lord, "*nous saurons bien nous défendre.*" Brême was afraid of this anecdote being put into print.

Came home after calling Finch a bore for saying he ought to be Duke of Cleveland, and was descended from Mr. Fitzherbert, son of Henry II.!

October 22.—Byron and I translated part of "Francesca da Rimini."

October 23.—At the Opera, in Brême's box, met M. de Beyle,<sup>1</sup> one of the *intendants de la mobilière de la couronne*, and secretary of Napoleon's Cabinet, who told us several extraordinary stories.

The Emperor Francis, who is a maker of sealing-wax, when he received despatches from Napoleon, used carefully to cut off the seal and give the letter to his Minister. Whilst the one was reading, the other was looking at the seal, rubbing it against his clothes, smelling it, and giving it its

<sup>1</sup> Known as Stendhal.

due praise. The eagle was well done, the sword perfect. Napoleon took care always to have his letters to his father-in-law well sealed. Beyle said he himself deciphered these details from the French Minister at Vienna. 1813.

Beyle was in waiting on Napoleon on the Russian expedition. After the affair of Maristudovitch, and when the cavalry was dismounted, Napoleon quite lost himself. He actually signed eight or ten decrees of advancements, or some such things, "Pompey"; and when Beyle took the occasion afterwards to say, "Your Majesty has made a slip of the pen here," he looked with a horrid grimace, and said, "Oh yes," and tore the decree and signed another.

He never would pronounce the word Kaluga, but called it sometimes Caligula, sometimes Salamanca. His attendants, who knew what he meant, went on writing or listening without making any remark.

During the retreat he was always dejected; his horse not being able to stand on account of the ice, he was obliged to get off and walk with a white staff. There is a French saying, "When a man is in misfortune he takes the white stick." One of the six or seven people close to him happened to say out loud, "*Ah, voilà l'Empereur qui marche avec le bâton blanc.*" Instead of taking this in good part, he said gloomily, "*Oui, messieurs, voilà les grandeurs humains.*" M. de Beyle walked close to him for three hours then; he never spoke a word.

1816. It was not true the army cried "*à bas le manteau.*" On the contrary, everybody thought that his salvation depended on Napoleon. The whole army looked anxiously at him to see in his face what hopes he might form. Once or twice some soldiers cried as he passed, "*Ce malin nous fait tuer tous.*" He turned round and looked at the speakers; the soldiers burst into tears. The distress of the army was so great that every man was half a fool, and many quite. Even the bravest hearts gave way. Davoust cried like a child.

In twenty-four hours, eighty-four generals of brigade and division came to headquarters, weeping and screeching: "*Ah, ma division, ah, ma brigade.*" . . . A dysentery seized on the army. The whole 45,000 men at Königsberg might have been taken by two regiments of the enemy, but the Russians suffered the French to remain eighteen days there, listening to the *Clemenza da Tito*, which was played there by a good company of singers.

The most unaccountable neglect was shown by Tchitchagof, where the whole army expected to be cut off. They had a river to pass and twelve bridges over a marsh; if one bridge had been cut down the whole was over. Beyle was riding in front of the staff; there was only a single Cossack looking at them, as the army filed over the river and the marsh. Napoleon was a little inspirited by this, and almost laughed at the stupidity of the



Admiral. When he went, Beyle waited on Murat, left Commander-in-Chief. Murat sat up in his bed and wept bitterly. Beyle's life was saved by Duroc, Marshal of the Palace, who gave him now and then a dish of coffee. This made all the difference in a man's life. 1812.

When at Königsberg the prescription was punch, of which Beyle drank a dozen beakers a day. The change in the appearance of the army was so great that their nearest friends could not recognise them. Nicolai, a coadjutor of Beyle, did not know him for two hours. Marshal Ney was the only man who preserved his presence of mind. When Napoleon came back from Moscow there were found three letters addressed by Talleyrand to Louis XVIII., and commencing, Sire. The letters were read at Council, when Beyle held the pen. It seemed the opinion that Talleyrand must be punished, and Napoleon himself affirmed as much. Cambacérès said, "*Quoi ! toujours du sang.*" This saved Talleyrand's life and put a stop to the discussion. Napoleon did not say another word. Beyle observed that a jury would have condemned Talleyrand. So far from being cruel, said Beyle, he (Napoleon) was not cruel enough. He had the Bourbons in his hands and would not make away with them. Beyle alluded to poison.

Madame Ney is come to Milan, so she is called and designated on her passport, it is supposed. Beyle told that she put this on her husband's

1816. tombstone, "*Trente-cinq ans de gloire, un jour d'erreur.*" The police made her take out the inscription, and forbade her to insert any other not approved by them.

I have every reason to think that Beyle is a trustworthy person—he is so reported by Brême. However, he has a cruel way of talking, and looks, and is, a sensualist.

*October 24.*—Brême called this evening, and told us he was most miserable. Byron offered to change places with him, and I supported, against conviction, that everybody ought to be, and most people are, happy.

*October 25.*—Byron and I went to the Opera to hear the famous Sgricci. The theatre was very full, both pit and boxes much more so than I had seen before.

*October 28.*—De Beyle told us that the finest day of Napoleon's life was the battle of Borodino. He was sitting on the ground between two sand-hills tapping a drum-head; every now and then they brought him word, such a one is killed. "Well, go you." General Caulaincourt is killed: "*Allez vous,*" looking about to his staff and so on, as the balls fled over the hill. This was in battle, but he had feelings when not in the height of action. He was sorry for Duroc. At the battle of Aspern or Wagram Bernadotte sent aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp for reinforcements, and to complain of the loss of his men. Two thousand were put out of action every half-

hour. At last he, Napoleon, was in the greatest 1816.  
 fury, and said let him take the batteries, and  
 send aides-de-camp afterwards. At last Berna-  
 dotte came himself, and mentioned his increas-  
 ing loss. Napoleon called him by all sorts of  
 bad names, coward, etc., and sent him back to  
 take the batteries, telling him if he lost 50,000  
 men he must do it, which he did. Bernadotte  
 always had the same manners, and did not bow  
 down before Napoleon, which Napoleon did not  
 like. When Napoleon heard that Ney and his  
 corps were saved after having been lost for four  
 days in the Russian campaign, he jumped up  
 higher, de Beyle says, than he ever saw a man  
 before, with joy; but still, he did not make Ney  
 a prince till he got to Paris, when he told some-  
 one: “*Dites à Ney qu’il est Prince.*”

De Beyle told us that Napoleon, for the latter  
 years of his reign, signed and generally read at an  
 average eighty-five decrees a day. He made the  
 calculation in order to get two more secretaries  
 named, which Napoleon, after being told that his  
 labour had increased from sixty to eighty-five  
 signatures per day, assented to with a smile of  
 satisfaction.

*October 30.*—Byron observed that the chief wit  
 of the Italian comedy seemed to be in telling home  
 truths.

*November 3.*—Left Milan with Byron.

*November 4.*—Set off for Brescia. Crossed the  
 river Oglio. We had a view now and then of the



1816. snowy Rhetian Alps, and after passing the small town of Coccaglio arrived at Brescia.

*November 5.*—We sat listening to the roaring of the lake, which lasted all night, Byron congratulating himself at the little to be seen at Sirmium, and I laughing at the *poca antichità* of Rome.

*November 6.*—The *Benacus* was tumbling against the shore, and it rained so that we could not go to Sirmium. Byron observed that the difference between the lake and the sea was that there was no swell in the offing.

Passed through Peschiera and Castel Nuovo to Verona. We were struck by the first view of the Adige, running under an old red bridge, half in ruins, one arch of which is under that of the Rialto. The streets in the suburb seemed larger than usual. Byron remarked his own arms on the escutcheon over the gate.

*November 7.*—Went out in a carriage with Byron, seeing sights.

*November 8.*—Arrived at Vicenza.

*November 9.*—Walked about Vicenza, where I was struck by the immense number of beggars which I had not seen before in Italy. Afterwards I saw a man in convulsions in the streets, neglected and alone. Our *lacquais de place* told us that pity was extinct, but that we could have no notion of the beggary until the evening, when those who were ashamed to be seen in the day came out.

*November 11.*—Got among the lights of Venice.

The echo of the oars told us we were under a bridge, and a boatman cried out to us, "The Rialto." Shortly afterwards we landed under the Hôtel de la Grande-Bretagne, on the great canal, and were shown up a magnificent flight of stairs into rooms, whose gildings and painted silks showed they belonged to better people in better times. 1816

The landlord talked English to us. We thought ourselves well placed. Talked on our arrival in this extraordinary city, which, even for its recollections, comes next to Athens and Rome, besides being the scene of our Shakespeare, which makes it classical to us.

*November 12.*—The cheapness of Venice, at least as far as we have been able to find, is like that of every other place visited by English—a name. Extreme beggary, want, and imposition of one half, according to the confession of our bankers, is all that travellers hear of in Venice.

Our *lacquais* told us that there are about 2,000 public gondolas, and that those houses which used to keep five or six boats now keep one or none. We saw some pushed by men in livery. It is an unimagined speed with which they slide along, but great dexterity is shown in cutting round the corners of the lanes or little canals through the lighters and little boats. Venice to me looked like Cadiz or some handsome town flooded.

One may be rowed about all day without knowing there are any streets in Venice, and one may walk about through their narrow alleys of shops

1316. of green-grocers, butchers, poulterers, and iron-workers, like the courts between the London squares, without knowing there are any canals. All the better houses on the principal canals have two entries, one by water and one by land.

We left letters of recommendation; but unfortunately the greater portion of our friends were in the country, whence they do not return until after the St. Martin.

The nocturnal life of the Venetians is no more; only two coffee-houses are now open all night, and it is thought these will be shut up this winter. But the inhabitants are still late: their plays do not begin until nine, nor their parties until eleven or twelve.

*November 13.*—Went in gondola with Byron to Finch at the Hôtel Favoretti, where he and Wathen and George Augustus Lee of Portland Place have a noble room. Met Captain de Blaquièrè there and the learned Greek, Mustoxidi, the editor of some of the Ambrosian MS. Captain de Blaquièrè is the author of the letter from the Mediterranean, mentioned in Mrs. Tully's book, and praised in *The Edinburgh Review*. He said handsome things to me about "Albanian Travels," and said that as the public listened to me he hoped I would say something about the management of our foreign politics in the Levant.

Byron met an old friend in Mrs. de Blaquièrè, who is no older than Miss White, William Smith's friend.



*November 14.*—Il Signor Professore Aglietti 1816.  
called. He had before left his name on a card. He is, or was, conductor of the *Medical Journal* and is a Councillor of State for Venice.

Coming into the room he said to Lord Byron, "Lady Holland has given me an introduction to the first poet of England." He is a good-looking man, like Lord Lynedoch. He wished to know how he could be useful, and after two or three silent fits took leave.

Went to the Opera at a small house and heard the famous Marchesini in *Tancred*. She delighted me, and indeed affected us both, more than Catalani.

*November 16.*—Dined with Byron at Finch's. After dinner came le Chevalier Naranzi, Consul of Russia, who told me that Canova had advised the Emperor Francis not to put the horses over the porch of the vestibule of St. Mark's Church, and that Francis, after seven or eight days, looking about from the belfrey, etc., said, "Canova tells me I had better not put the horses over the porch; but I think there is something in an old position, so I shall have them put there."

Afterwards Finch and I went with Naranzi to Madame Albrizzi,<sup>1</sup> who has been called the Madame

<sup>1</sup> Isabella Festochi (1761-1836) married first a Venetian nobleman, Carlo Antonio, who, however, divorced her in 1795, and in 1796 she married Count Giuseppe Albrizzi. She wrote descriptions of her distinguished friends and frequenters of her salon, and Lord Byron is included among them. Moore, who was present at one of her assemblies, describes it as worse than one of Lydia White's.

1816. de Staël of Italy. A very poor copy indeed, though she seems a very good-natured woman. She was born Teotoki, a Corfiote, but boasted to me her family was Athenian. She talked Romaic to me as Naranzi had done, who is also a Greek, I believe. A few gentlemen and two ladies came into the little room, and water was given when called for. I heard nothing, but saw from smiles and laughter, which now and then was a little equivocal and certainly not high breeding, that the company was good-humoured enough. Mus-toxidi came in; he seemed the *enfant gâté* of the party, who called him Andreas. I cannot help thinking him conceited. He is said to believe himself the handsomest of men.

I came home thinking Italian society very different from everything I had seen in France or England. The ladies are perhaps over-civil and smiling, and I heard none of that snip-snap, short, and interruption quick, which makes half the talk of Paris and London. A good deal of Greek in this circle. I presume that formerly the possession of the seven islands must have given a tinge to Venice. No politics.

*November 20.*—Byron has written the following verses on the Helena, which he sent to me, having no one else to show them to.

In this belovèd marble view,  
Above the works and thoughts of man  
What nature could, but would not, do,  
And Beauty and Canova can!

Beyond imagination's power,  
Beyond the Bard's defeated art,  
With immortality her dower,  
Behold the Helen of the heart!

1816.

Of which I observe that the last verse would be better without the first, the same being partly repeated in the stanzas. The first stanza has also two faults: the first being that there is no antithesis between the third and fourth lines, though there seems to be one, for nature, it is said, could do it. To make this antithesis, the *could* should be *would*, or the *can* should be *would*. The second is that there is a clinch in saying "Beauty can make the bust." Byron means that Canova with his *beau idéal* can. The last verse is, as Webster would say, Byronic.

*November 21.*—Finch and two Greeks called. The Greeks mentioned that assassinations might be expected this winter, as there were some last winter. He mentioned one, which turned out afterwards to be the only one, and Byron's *lacquais* said that Venice was the safest city in Europe. I have myself walked about courts and alleys in the night without accident certainly.

*November 22.*—Finch told me that Burghersh was warned by a German Count that Napoleon was likely to escape from Elba. The Count had come to the knowledge that a Jew at Leghorn had shipped off to Elba several thousand old buttons with the eagle on them.

Burghersh went into company and laughed at



1816. the Count's information, saying, "He thinks himself a clever fellow." Ten days after, Napoleon was gone.

The Colonel told me a story about Lord Camden, which I had told him. He gave me names, and changed the Tuileries for the Louvre, so he has not the best memory in the world.

*November 28.*—In St. Mark's Place to-day, by even-light, saw a crowd collected at a respectful distance round a story-teller, who, Zannette, Byron's *lacquais*, tells me was an actor, and speaks very pure Italian. He relates portions of history from all nations and ages. I presume that up to a certain point there is more information diffused in Italy than in any other part of the world, and a certain smack of taste.

*December 1.*—Lord Byron and I dressed to-day to dine at the Governor's on a verbal invitation through our *lacquais*, but after running to the steps of the palace, went on without stopping, except to determine not to go in for fear of a mistake.

We dined at Pellegrino's, and heard from Madame Albrizzi, at her box at the Opera, that we had been waited for two hours.

*December 23.*—Went to Madame Albrizzi's, where there were several people. The most learned of the men asked my brother if there was a great cavern at Calcutta, meaning the Black Hole.

*December 4.*—Wrote a letter to Madame Albrizzi, 1816.  
telling her I could not give her Lord Byron's verses  
on the Princess of Wales.

Dined with Byron, and went to the St. Benedetta  
Theatre with him. Took leave of my friend with  
the left hand. *Absit omen.*

## CHAPTER IX

1816. DIARY. *December* 5.—Left Venice in the morning, the moon shining brightly on the palaces and canals. Started for Florence.

BOOK.—I went by Padua and Mantua and Modena to Bologna. At this city I stayed a few days to see the galleries, and had the good fortune to become known to the famous Mezzofanti,<sup>1</sup> and the scarcely less famous Signora Tambroni, Professor of Greek in the University.

DIARY. *December* 13.—Sent a letter of introduction to Professor Mezzofanti. The wonderful polyglot called, and brought Mr. Woods, the young architect, with him, Colonel Finch's friend. When hearing that Henry had been in Bengal he asked him if he knew Malay, as if that were the language of Bengal, and then said he did know something of it, which he had learnt by grammar and dictionary—the way in which he has learnt all his languages. He speaks English on the

<sup>1</sup> Giuseppe Caspare, Cardinal Mezzofanti (1774–1849), distinguished as a linguist and Oriental scholar. Became librarian of the Vatican in 1833 and was made a Cardinal in 1838.



1816.

whole better than any foreigner I have ever heard, except Pisani of Constantinople, with very little accent. He has a short, wide, flat forehead; his hair he wears parted in front. His eyes are lively. His features are small, but agreeable, though a little marked with the small-pox. He is short and thin. He did not seem to lose any occasion of showing his capacity, which, as far as memory is concerned, seems miraculous.

*December 14.*—Went out with a party sight-seeing. We were joined by Mezzofanti, who took us into the library. It consists of a hundred and fifty thousand books, and forty thousand manuscripts.

Mezzofanti took down the Lord's Prayer in a hundred and fifty-seven languages, and gave us some specimens of his wonderful capacities, in which he was tried by my brother Henry in the Oriental department, and, according to his report, not found wanting. He mentioned that Armoric meant *al marc*, and told us we had no sound corresponding to the *j'ai* of the French. I did not know this before. He took us into his room and gave us some details as to the university.

In the evening Mezzofanti came and took us to Signora Tambroni. We found her in a garret sitting before a lamp covered with a green shade alone, at least she was alone until a young man, a pupil of Mezzofanti's, entered just before us. She had several books before her, and her room

1816. was altogether professional. Her eyes are considered in a state of peril. She has a fine face, not very unlike Mrs. Siddons. She talked very little, and what she did say was perhaps over-modest. She said, "I am nothing," and extolled our English ladies. However, she knew nothing of Ballard's learned ladies, and very little of Lady Jane Grey. She only spoke Italian.

Mezzofanti would tell her all I had seen at Constantinople and Athens, in a style not a little pedantic. She was quite a thing apart, and came to look over the staircase as we went away from her.

Mezzofanti mentioned that she wrote very well in Italian and Greek poetry, and had published her verses, which were now out of print, but which she could not be prevailed upon to reprint. We took leave of Mezzofanti with no little regret, and the next day left for Florence.

BOOK.—On December 16 I arrived at Florence, and remained in that delightful capital until January 8. Then it was that commenced my long intimacy with Cosimo Buonarroti. There also I made the acquaintance of the Marchioness Lenzoni, the last of the Medici.

DIARY. *December 26.* FLORENCE.—I went to Madame Albany, the wife of our Pretender and the widow of Alfieri. At least by the latter bastard title she has become the lion of Florence.

Such is the force of genius that the mistress of a poet is more admired than the wife of a Prince. 1918.

She wrote me a note on my delivering a letter jointly given to Lord Byron and myself by Colonel Fitzgerald, and I attended immediately to it. I found a fat old woman with blunt features and a coarse voice, with four or five ladies with her. She desired me to sit down, and then put several questions to me in the usual manner, varied with very little dexterity.

She talked about her London *élégantes*; said she did not think Lady Jersey so handsome, and so on. She was vastly good-natured, at least for a Princess, which she affects not a little to be.

*December 28.*—Poor Madame de Staël in her "Corinne" is a dreadful blunderer: at the close writes romance. She talks about Lorenzo the Magnificent and his brother Julian being hissed in the chapel *dei depositi* of Michael Angelo.

Madame Lenzoni mentioned that she mistook St. Zenobio for Queen Zenobia.

*December 30.*—We went to a ball given by Barrett at our hotel. He introduced me to a physician, who said he was Napoleon's physician at Elba and had accompanied him to Paris, which he had left in October 1815.

The Doctor told Napoleon at Fontainebleau that affairs looked well, but he wished the Empress and her son were in France. Said Napoleon,



1816. *Vous les verrez bientôt.* In the same false persuasion he told him afterwards that if the Court of Vienna did not make peace with him the Austrians would rise against their Government.

He always talked highly of the English; and at Porto Ferrajo, when some of his staff were abusing them for their conduct at Washington, he said: "Don't talk ill of them; they are a great nation."

Coming from Elba he gained the hearts of all on board with him; he kept watch with them. They would all have been cut to pieces for him, said the Doctor.

The Doctor asked leave to go to campaign with him. Napoleon refused him. He and Corvisart recommended a surgeon to him. He found out it was the one who had attended Josephine, and objected to him, saying, "*Il a tué l'Impératrice Joséphine.*"

The Doctor saw him an hour after he returned from Waterloo. He was much tired and took a bath. On the Saturday, two days after his abdication at Malmaison, the Doctor and Vicomte Turenne, his chamberlain, and Lavalette were together whilst Napoleon was in his bath. Lavalette said that he should advise Napoleon to go off incognito next night, with one servant and one friend, which he would be, gain the coast, get into a fishing-boat, pass over to England, and surrender to the first Justice of Peace. He passed in to Napoleon and gave this advice. Madame Bertrand was also for the English scheme.

Flahaut said, "If you do that I foresee you will soon be in the Tower of London." 1816.

Some one advised Austria ; but Napoleon thought that he should be well treated for a month and then sent into a fortress in Moravia. When he got to Rochefort, he was not at all obliged to surrender to the English, and when he did he had not the least conception of the treatment he should meet with.

BOOK.—I set out for Rome on January 8, taking the longest road, by Arezzo, and I turned a little out of my way to visit Cortona. Thence by Thrasimene I went to Perugia, and so on, by Terni, to Rome. 1817.

At Rome<sup>1</sup> I stayed until May 21, and then went to Naples. From Naples I made the usual excursions in the usual manner, hiring, as Forsyth says, on each occasion, "a cicerone and asses." Thus provided, I visited Portici and Herculaneum, Vesuvius, Salerno, Pompeii, and Paestum. I

<sup>1</sup> Lord Byron was at Rome from May 5, 1817, to May 28, 1817. Mr. Hobhouse left Rome on May 21, 1817.

Unfortunately, the Diary with the account of Lord Byron and Hobhouse meeting at Rome cannot be found, hence a gap between their parting at Venice, December 4, 1816, and their meeting at La Mira, July 31, 1817; but as Hobhouse was absorbed in antiquarian researches, embodied later on in his work entitled, "Notes in Illustration of Canto IV. of 'Childe Harold,'" and Lord Byron occupied composing the fourth canto or riding in the Campagna, probably there was not much to record of special intercourse between the two friends. It was during this short visit to Rome that Byron sat for his bust to Thorwaldsen and gave it as a gift to Hobhouse. The bust is now in the possession of the Editor.

1817. returned, on one of these trips, by Amalfi. I visited Posilippo frequently, and all the contiguous wonders as far as Misenum. As this was my first sight of these enchanting shores, I was too much dazzled by their beauties, and too ignorant of the treasures they contain, to record any detailed account of those days of delight. But even now, after almost half a century, the remembrance of them has a charm for me beyond any present enjoyment.

I left Naples on June 5, and, sleeping the first night at Mola and the next at Velletri, got to Rome the next day.

I stayed at Rome only long enough to take leave of Thorwaldsen, and one or two others who had shown me civilities during the last winter.

On June 9 I left Rome, slept the first night at Viterbo, the second at Radicofani, the third and fourth at Sienna. The next day brought me to Florence, and there I stayed until June 23, when I set out in a broiling sun for Pisa. Thence I went to Lucca, and so on to Sarzana and Lerici, where I hired a boat to take me to Genoa. The Gulf of Spezia seems now (1864) destined to become of infinite importance. When I saw it in 1817 there were only a few small craft in its spacious basin.

One night's sail brought me to Genoa; I stayed there until July 2, when I went to Turin, sleeping one night at Alessandria.



At Turin I saw the same English Minister and 1817.  
the same Court that I had seen in exile at  
Cagliari in 1809-10.

From Turin I went to Casale; thence by  
Voghera, Tortona, and Pavia, to Placentia and  
Parma, where I made a short stay, and thence  
joined Lord Byron on the banks of the Brenta.  
He was living then at a villa called La Mira.

## CHAPTER X

1817. DIARY. *July* 31.—Arrived at La Mira and Byron's house on the Brenta by half-past eleven. I saw my friend well and in spirits. Mr. Matthew (Monk) Lewis was in the house with him.

I saw a singular character to-day, a Mexican Marquis who knew Voltaire, and of whom more anon. He is past ninety.

Byron took me with him to the house of a physician, where I am to have a bed. His four daughters and wife conversed with him. They sweep the house, etc., and yet are reckoned good company enough for any of the high as well as low, who now crowd the Brenta and make it quite a watering-place.

*August* 5.—Passed the evening strolling about on horseback with Byron and making assignations.

*August* 6.—Went in Byron's carriage to Fusina, and thence in a boat to Venice, where I called on Siri and Wilhalm.<sup>1</sup>

I was not struck with anything at Venice to-day, except the white veils and black eyes and fine skins of the women.

<sup>1</sup> Byron's bankers in Venice

M. Zagati told me—what I have noted before in my last visit to Venice—that the education of the higher classes was, before the French came, almost nothing ; the women could positively hardly ever write, or play, or dance, or do anything but embroider, perhaps, a little, and sing the psalter—accomplishments which they learnt in the convents, where they were kept until they were taken out to be married at sixteen. 1817.

The men were nearly as ignorant : learnt no languages, could scarcely write or even dance, and were ashamed to be thought fond of reading.

*August 7.*—Heard some stories of Lewis's.

Sheridan was to make a motion in the Commons one day and Lord Holland in the Peers on the next, on the same subject. Lord Holland had a letter which he meant to make the ground of his speech. He called on Sheridan the day of Sheridan's motion : he found him in bed, ill, and saying he should not go down to the House, or should not make his motion that day. Lord Holland read his letter to him. Sheridan asked to have it to copy some figures in it. Lord Holland complied, and going afterwards at six o'clock to the House of Commons, Sheridan gave him the letter and thanked him. Shortly after, Sheridan got up, made his motion, and to the surprise of Lord Holland and Lewis—who was sitting by him—spoke Lord Holland's letter nearly word for word. Lord Holland was in great consternation at having lost the materials for his next day's speech.

1817. Meeting Sheridan in the lobby he upbraided him. "Ay," said Sheridan, "I have such a good memory."

Lewis told us that Crabbe, the poet, when Fox was Minister with Lord North, sent his poem to him, in which was a compliment to Fox. Fox was asked to get him preferment. Crabbe thought he had waited too long, and sent him a letter, in which he begged Mr. Fox to recollect his promise, and also to know that the same pen which had made his panegyric could also write satire. Fox took no notice of this, got Crabbe the preferment, and then wrote to tell him of the thing being done and begging to hear no more of him. However, when Fox was Minister in 1805, Crabbe sent him another poem, and it was the last thing which Fox read.

M. Lewis is more fond of contradiction than any man I ever knew. He is the completest egotist in the world, and at the same time that he speaks of his contempt of all the world, shows how much he is in the power of any man who chooses to say an ill-natured thing. He seems, however, to be a man of principle and attached to truth, which he tells in as many tiresome details as any man living.

*August 9.*—Hear some of Lewis's stories. Find that Byron has given him a sort of document by which he asserts that if Lady Byron's counsellors say that their lips are sealed, the sealing has not been his. He wishes them to speak, and has



always wished it, and regrets that he did not insist on Lady Byron bringing her case and complaint before the public. 1817.

I disapprove of this document, because it will gratify Lady Byron's friends to think that Byron is annoyed and because I should think no one can suppose that Lady Byron's counsellors meant that their lips were sealed on Lord Byron's account or at his desire, but merely because they were her counsellors in a private and delicate affair.

I intended to show Lewis "Francesca da Rimini," but he was occupied in reading Byron's fourth canto of "Childe Harold," which he has just finished, and of which he has repeated the first stanza to me. Very good indeed.

*August 20.*—Ride with Byron. Return over the other side of the river from Dolo. Remarked the moon reigning on the right of us and the Alps still blushing with the blaze of the sunset. The Brenta came down upon us, all purple—a delightful scene, which Byron has put into three stanzas of his "Childe Harold."

*August 22.*—Madame de Staël is reported to have died a Catholic, although sensible to the last, also to have had a son at forty-nine, and to have been married to Rocca.

I read some of Moore's "Lalla Rookh," and think the slumbering albatross is not bad; but it is all Byron.

*August 28.*—Read MS. of St. Helena, a singular performance by some one who must know

1817. Napoleon well. He said to Macnamara that he should have died at Moscow. I find the same sentiment here.

*September 4.*—Read over Byron's fourth canto again yesterday. Byron read me a prefatory letter to myself for his canto. Well written in his manner.

*September 10.*—Lord Byron and myself set off in his carriage in the morning to go to Este. Fine morning view of the Alps, clear and grey in the distance. Arrived at Padua, heard of troops marching, and determined not to go beyond Arquá.

Arrived at the farmhouse belonging to the parsonage; we left our carriage and walked up the hill to Arquá.

We found the parson would not give or sell our horses any hay, saying his house was no inn. I presume he is annoyed by the number of visitants, yet Arquá is one of the most retired villages I have seen.

We returned in hot weather to Padua. Arrived in a beautiful evening by seven o'clock at La Mira, and dined.

*September 14.*—Byron talked to me about family affairs to-night. He does not care about his wife now—that is certain.

*September 17.*—Went to Venice with Byron, and took up my apartments at the Gran Bretagna. Dined there. Went to Byron's in the evening.

*September 19.*—Went to the Grimani Palace with Byron, and again admired the little marble cabinet—the Socrates and Alcibiades, the Marcus Agrippa in the Court, the peasant with the basket. No catalogue has been made of these antiques. 1817

The Kinnairds come, send for Byron; conversation. The Kinnairds have been at Munich and at Augsburg. At the first place they dined with the King of Bavaria and Prince Eugene; at the second, saw Hortense of Holland, F. Beauharnais.

Hortense is positive that the MS.<sup>1</sup> from St. Helena is Napoleon's, and says the mention made of her mother is a certain proof of it. It is short and feeling; another writer would have looked about for effects, Lord Kinnaird thinks. This opinion must have come from Prince Eugene, although he could not find an opportunity to ask him.

The King of Bavaria is most liberal and free-spoken. He mentioned the attempts that had been made to make him persecute Hortense.

*September 20.*—Byron and the Kinnairds and I dined at our inn. Lord Kinnaird told us a story of a conspiracy between the Prussians and the discontented in Paris in the winter of 1815, of

<sup>1</sup> *Manuscrit venu de Ste. Hélène d'une manière inconnue.* This work was brought to Mr. Murray with an assurance that it was genuine, and a translation of it was published by him in 1817, but he never knew the authorship, although it was commonly supposed to have been written by Napoleon himself. It went rapidly through seven editions.

1817. which Lord Castlereagh was not ignorant and was supposed to participate. The Prussians gave 30,000 arms, not yet found.

Castlereagh was shown to them—the conspirators. The object was a pretext to dismember France; it is not thought that Castlereagh was in the secret, and that he had no other motive than finding it all out is most probable. It was found out; forty-two officers of rank were imprisoned for three months, but were not punished, hence powerful interest must have been made for them. This seems to me a fairy tale, but Lord Kinnaird says he is sure of the fact.

*September 21.*—Went out in gondola with Lord Kinnaird and Lord Byron to the gardens. Lord Kinnaird read to me a new poem of Frere's, excellent and quizzical—no better since the days of Swift.

D. Kinnaird tells me my letter to Bowles has not taken. I am too violent. But he is not a judge; he was angry at my not having followed his advice about shortening the work, and he is one of your modern readers who cannot support an argument, but must have stories. Some one, whom I suspect to be Lord Lansdowne, told Baillie that I had too many stories—hard task to suit the palates of such guests. Very bad news of S. B. Davies.

*September 26.*—Got to the arena. Sit in the open air, but the stage lighted. It has a very ancient air, and in this starry climate is delight-



ful. The Great Devil was the hero of the piece, 1817. and the audience entered into all his distinctions about robbing. A good emperor and a bad intendant were the chief personages, next to the robber.

*September 27.*—Sent a letter to my father telling him to take a lodging for me in Albany, if possible, for I am coming home.

Byron returns to La Mira.

Pigou breakfasted with me, and heard the fourth canto. He was incensed at the Kinnairds presuming to criticise it.

*October 6.*—Dine at Pellegrino's. Come home and find Byron come and gone in an equinoctial storm.

*October 7.*—Duke of Devonshire called. He is just come from Russia and Vienna. Appears to me much improved. He is delighted with Russia, tells me the Emperor has as much pride in his capital and empire, as a private gentleman in his house and park; but they can't whitewash a house in Petersburg without his permission!

I told him that the Princess of Wales had a Mameluke outside her carriage. He answered it was not so bad as having a courier inside. Now, this is not bad for anybody.

*October 8.*—Went to Fusina in a gondola, and walked thence to La Mira in a little more than two hours. Saw Byron, dined with him, and returned with him in his carriage to Fusina.

*October 14.*—Got into a gondola with four men,

1817. and went to Fusina; blowing hard. Found Lord Byron had been waiting, and was gone. Went on in gondola to La Mira; found Byron well, and merry and happy, more charming every day. Took up quarters with him at the Casa Trabucco.

*October 15.*—Began my operations by getting up between seven and eight, and copying and writing notes. Byron appears about two; I write on until three or four, when, if weather admits, I ride with him.

*October 19.*—Mr. Joy and a Mr. Gregson of Oxford called. Saw Davies in London, and apparently going on well. Brought letter of introduction to Byron and me from him.

Heard L. W. Ward has been cut up by Romilly and Tierney; hope that the Ministers would pardon his support as easily as the Whigs did his desertion.

*October 20.*—This morning an American gentleman, Mr. Ticknor, called, and seemed to know every considerable person in Germany and France. A friend of President Jefferson, who told him that Franklin talked French worse than anybody he ever heard. Used to say "*mon poche*," and yet was most voluble and successful in Paris. Jefferson wrote the "Declaration of Independence." Ticknor describes him as an old man living on a farm on a hill, Monticello, eighty miles from Washington. Ticknor was in Germany when the attack on Goethe's life came out in *The Edinburgh Review*. Goethe has an enemy at Jena,

a magazine conductor, who printed and translated the article directly. 1817.

Ticknor tells me my "Travels" have been reprinted in America these two years, and my "Letters on France" lately advertised.

He brought in an American fellow-traveller, a Mr. Roberts. After they had gone, Lord Byron and I went to Venice.

*November 1.*—Set out with Byron in his carriage. Went to Padua and Montselice, and thence to Este, and saw the Villa Berlinguis,<sup>1</sup> which he has taken of Hoppner, our Consul—a beautiful place in a green knoll, with the walls of the old Este cradle opposite. Este seems a nice town, with a large market-place. Came back to La Mira, after a lovely, agreeable day.

*November 12.*—Pass last evening at La Mira—a strange life; very tranquil and comfortable.

*November 13.*—Left Lord Byron's hospitable mansion. Byron and I went together to Fusina, and thence to Venice, where I took up my abode in the Frezzeria, opposite Byron's house.

*November 14.*—Play in the evening at St. Benedetto with Byron, one of Goldone's *il Maldicante*—ludicrous. Coffee-house life natural here. Vestris is certainly a good actor, and there is something natural; that is the exaggerated nature of the Italians in all their acting.

*November 17.*—Go with Byron in gondola to the Lido. Coming home observe the setting sun,

<sup>1</sup> Now known as the Villa Künkler.



1817. orange and green in the sky, which I never recollect to have seen before. The water one flame.

Hoppner, the painter's son, Consul here, tells Byron he feels no sympathy with the Italians who lost their liberties to the French. This is the way these scoundrels talk and write home to their Governments, who call their nonsense good information. Hoppner says Petritini is a liar and a bad man, so I must take care about the anecdotes he told me.

*November 20.*—Went to the Gardens. Met Byron. Walked with him and came back in his gondola. I went to Byron's and sat till twelve.

*November 22.*—Went with Byron to Lido. Lovely day. Recollect the glee inspired by galloping along the beach. A light breeze.

Byron told me Lady Byron thought he did not like me. At another time said I had no principle, because Byron used to say I should laugh at some fine sayings of hers. Poor, dear, contradictory thing.

*November 23.*—Ride on Lido. Met a banker of Augsburg and his son; coming back again, met the banker with Byron. Byron holloaed out: "Hobhouse, what do you think?—the Princess Charlotte is dead." The banker had read of her dying in childbed, after being delivered of a dead son. We were really affected with this news, and went home conjecturing.

*November 24.*—At Byron's saw Mr. Hoppner,



our Consul, who had received a mourning letter with the intelligence in copy from a gazette extraordinary. 1817.

The Princess died on November 5, to the inexpressible grief, the *Gazette* says, of her royal father and all the royal family. Poor thing, she had just begun to be happy.

*November 28.*—Byron's house robbed of coats and candlesticks.

*December 1.*—This evening went to Madame Albrizzi's, who is just come from Paris. A good-natured woman, with her son Giuseppine, a clever young fellow. A party in a circle sat till twelve o'clock.

An English lady there has a reputation of knowing astronomy and reading Greek, a Mrs. Somerville. It is dull work at this good woman's house, but they say it is the best in Venice. Met there young Dandolo, a prig who takes snuff. His name was put to the answer to Mustoxidi. Saw also Soranzo, who was to have been doge, and a Madame Petritini, who is going to write a Life of Lady M. W. Montagu, and has written to Byron for materials, she knowing nothing of the matter.

*December 2.*—Called on Byron, and found a young man there, one Piazza, a Dalmatian, who has been to England and has brought back a Bond Street dress, to the great amusement of all Venice. The Venetian poet, Boratti, has made a satire on him. Young Piazzzi went to him and

1817. made him read it aloud to him, saying, "If there is anything in it ungentlemanlike you shall fight me." He heard it, and hesitating a little, said: "I don't know, but I believe it will do."

Byron heard this story from Nullo, a Government courier, who sometimes travels post, and at others lives in the best of this strangely organised society here. His post used to cost 60,000 francs, I hear, so there must be great roguery in it. This young fellow is not devoid of talent, but has the usual tone of the day. He was much struck with England and our comfort, the skins of our women, and the silence with which our Prince went to Parliament.

*December 5.*—Dined at Hoppner's, our Consul, a good fellow, a little too witty with his friend Pizzo, about eating. Mrs. Hoppner, a charming Swiss woman. Sat next to a Mr. Parilini of Bassano, who has been to England. He is a scientific man. He told me they had no natural historians in Italy. He was most struck in England with a roast-beef supper, with the tide, and with a Scottish regiment, and in London with my acquaintance Warburton, who took him to a dinner of scientific men: Woolaston, Black, Thompson, etc., who sat till twelve o'clock at night, and never spoke a word of any language but English, of which he did not understand a word.

*December 13.*—Byron was unwell, so sat at home. He told me an epigram he wrote on a farce of Tom Moore's, *The Bluestocking, or M.P.*

Good plays are scarce,  
So Moore writes Farce,  
And is his wit so brittle?  
We knew before  
That little's Moore,  
But now 'tis Moore that's little.

1817.

Tom Moore was one day confessing to Byron an epigram he had written on his friend Rogers. Byron, seduced by the example, disburdened his conscience by telling Moore of his, Moore looked as black as night and did not relish it at all.

Tom Moore wrote to Longman before he published his last poem, "Lalla Rookh," and said that although he had promised £300 for it, as times were hard he would take two. Longman asked a few days to consider, and then said he should stand to his bargain, so Lewis writes in a letter to Byron.

*December 14.*—Byron and I talked of Hume, which I have been reading. Went in the evening to Saint Benedetto. In the next box to us was a nobleman who Byron told me gives money to be allowed to sing on the stage.

*December 17.*—Spent evening with Byron, after calling on Madame Albrizzi, and leaving two pamphlets of Constant's which her son had lent me.

*December 19.*—Went in the evening to Hoppner's, and there heard that Constant is believed in England to have written the MS. of "St. Helena." Met the French Consul, a tall man.

1818. *December 31.*—Am preparing for my homeward-bound voyage. Evening with Byron, and ushered in the New Year together.

*January 4.*—Read the beginning of a novel of Byron's. He adumbrates himself, Don Julian. Florian has made himself also a young Spaniard. There is not, however, the least plagiary or resemblance, it must be said. I sent some verses to Byron for New Year's Day.

Let others measure, year by year,  
The progress of their dull decay,  
And, flushed by hope or chilled by fear,  
Forget they wither, day by day.

These mortal æons should not bind  
The periods of thy nobler race.  
The bright creations of thy mind  
Are beings nor of time, nor space.

Our narrow scan may fondly hail  
With joy the only year we see,  
Thy genius spreads the loftier sail,  
And meditates eternity.

I had written "And launches for eternity," but Byron said it looked like hanging.

*January 5.*—Ride with Byron. Pass the evening with him looking over fourth canto and notes.

"ITALY."—On January 7 Lord Byron and I rowed to the Lido with two singers, one of whom was a carpenter, and the other a gondolier. The former placed himself at the prow, the latter at the stern of the boat. A little after leaving the



quay of the Piazzetta, they began to sing, and continued their song until we arrived at the island. They gave us, amongst other essays, the "Death of Clorinda" and the "Palace of Armida," and did not sing the Venetian, but the Tuscan verses. The carpenter, however, who was the cleverer of the two, and was frequently obliged to prompt his companion, told us that he could translate the original. He added that he could sing almost three hundred stanzas, but had not spirits (*morbin* was the word he used) to learn any more, or to sing what he already knew: a man must have idle time on his hands to acquire, or to repeat, and, said the poor fellow, "Look at my clothes and at me—I am starving." This speech was more affecting than his performance, which habit alone can make attractive. The recitative was shrill, screaming, and monotonous, and the gondolier behind assisted his voice by holding his hand to one side of his mouth. The carpenter used a quiet action, which he evidently endeavoured to restrain; but was too much interested in his subject altogether to repress. From these men we learned that singing is not confined to the gondoliers, and that although the chant is seldom if ever voluntary, there are still several amongst the lower classes who are acquainted with a few stanzas.

DIARY. *January 7.*—Took my last ride with Byron. Read to him my opening paper for our

1818. other world, which he says is not so *stiff* as my usual style—a hint which I shall follow.

Passed the evening with Byron, who put the last hand to his “Childe Harold,” and took leave of my dear friend, for so I think him, at twelve o’clock. A little before his going he told me he was originally a man of a great deal of feeling, but it had been absorbed. I believe the first part of what he said literally. God bless him !

## CHAPTER XI

DIARY. *January 18.*—TURIN. Dine with Mr. 1818.  
W. Hill, our envoy-extraordinary here. He told me that he dined with Lord Thurlow the last time Lord Thurlow was brought down to dinner, fifteen days before his death. Hill remembered his topics. He did not believe Buonaparte ever thought of invading England. He was astounded at his friend Mr. Fox saying Hanover was as much a part of England as Hampshire, and said that although he ought not to be surprised at any change in politicians, he did not expect to have lived to hear that.

*January 30.*—A post or two from Boulogne met the Duke of Wellington with three carriages, without any escort. Benjamin Constant told me his staff was greater than that of any sovereign.

*January 31.*—Set off a little after five for Calais. Took my passage on board the *Sybil*, and sat in coffee-house with others in waiting. There was a young Maitland, son of General Maitland of the Guards, who commanded one of the brigades in the battle of Waterloo. He told me he had heard the Duke of Wellington praise in the

1818. highest terms the conduct of the French in the battle of Waterloo.

*February 2.*—Arrived at Dover and landed in England after an absence of a year and a half, which is the longest period I was ever away from my country.

*February 4.*—Murray came. I read “Childe Harold” to him. He was in raptures. Arrived at Whitton.

*February 5.*—My father took me to town in his carriage. Called on D. Kinnaird. Scrope B. Davies has partially recovered himself. I called on him. Dined with D. Kinnaird. Met Scrope B. Davies and embraced. F. (Poodle) Byng dined with us.<sup>1</sup>

Spent half the night at D. Kinnaird’s, where I was introduced to Long Pole Wellesley and saw Colonel Cooke.<sup>2</sup> The latter alluded politely to what I had said of him in my Travels and invited me to his house, saying he would make a better country gentleman than ambassador. Henry Pearce was there, little changed by eleven years’ absence, I think.

*February 6.*—Called on Murray. Gifford says

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Frederick Gerald Byng, youngest son of John, fifth Viscount Torrington, born 1784, died June 6, 1871. He served for a short time in the Army; but in 1801 he entered the Foreign Office. He was a page at the coronation of George IV., and in 1834 was made Gentleman Usher of the Privy Chamber. He was a very well-known figure in London society during the earlier part of the nineteenth century, and is mentioned in nearly all the books of memoirs of that time.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Sir George Cooke, 1768–1837.



the fourth canto is Byron's best effort. The notes 1818.  
he has not yet read.

*February 9.*—Called on Mrs. Leigh. Lady  
Byron has been very ill. She knew nothing of  
Brougham's reading Lady Byron's letter in  
Florence.

Came to my new home at 43, Clarges Street.  
S. B. D. called and took me to dine with Mr. F.  
(Poodle) Byng. There I met Luttrell, Colonel  
Cooke, and Colonel Armstrong. Passed a very  
agreeable day. The three talked trifles about  
houses, etc., most ably, and Davies was silent.  
Colonel Cooke told me Gentz and Metternich  
told him they believed positively in the St.  
Helena MS.

*February 17.*—Met George Byron, who, I see,  
is flat against Lord Byron in the marriage con-  
cern, but unwittingly owned to me that he always  
treated Lady Byron with the greatest kindness  
in his presence. He assures me he knows not  
what was the cause of the separation, and yet  
he lived in the house at the time.

*February 18.*—Went to Lord Holland's, 7, Clif-  
ford Street, and dined. Met Lord Dungannon,  
Lord and Lady King, Lord Lauderdale, and  
H. Brougham. The latter told me that the Duke  
of Orleans, in October 1814, told him that if  
Buonaparte reappeared from Elba he would only  
have to walk to Paris. Also that Carnot told  
him that Buonaparte received intelligence from  
France, but not by correspondents, but French

1818. who went occasionally to Elba. This is a proof that Carnot had no intelligence with him.

Lord Holland mentioned a curious anecdote of the discipline of the Scots. His uncle, General Stephen Fox, taking leave of some regiment forgave a Scotsman a flogging. There were many Scots in the regiment, but not a word of approbation was heard. A year or two afterwards he received a letter from Glasgow signed by two or three hundred soldiers, now disbanded, who said that it did not become them when on duty to praise or blame their Commander, but that now they took that occasion of thanking His Honour for his lenity to their countryman.

Lord Holland said that when a boy he was in Mull; a peasant gave him oatcake and milk to drink. He liked neither, but gave the man a crown. "Ye wunna my milk," said the man, "and I wunna yere money."

*February 21.*—Dined at the Club to-day at the Piazza Coffee-house. Our first meeting: Burdett, Wilson, Davies, Kinnaird, and myself. Bickersteth and Byron named members.

[ *February 24.*—Went to Devonshire House, where Lady Caroline Lamb seized me and made me sit next to her at supper. She insisted upon sending me a ticket for Almack's next day. Byron's "Beppo" is out. Lady Caroline Lamb quoted it to me as Hookham Frere's. Croker, of the Admiralty, has found it out to be Byron's.

*February 25.*—Met Michael Angelo Taylor, who said that in his career as M.P. he thought the House of Commons always pretty much the same. Fox, Pitt, and Burke all spoke too long and against time. There was as much talent displayed as ever. 1818.

*March 7.*—Dined at Mr. Longman's, the publisher. Rees was at the bottom of the table. W. Godwin there; he the only man of note. He recollected that Porson had talked to him of the cobbler of Messina—said a few words, wore spectacles, a fine forehead. On my left was an agreeable man, a doctor in a Court livery, who had been at Joannina.

*March 15.*—Went in the evening to Holland House. Lady Holland told me that the letter quoted in Wilson's book is Lord Holland's, and that the consequence of that letter had been the Duke of Wellington's coolness to Lord Holland and her, which had broke out at a party at Sir C. Stewart's at Paris. He feels Ney's death is a blot.

*March 23.*—Dined with R. Wilbraham. Present: Sir H. Davy, Heber, Dr. Holland, Payne Knight, Combe, Secretary of R. Society, a Mr. Coen, and Ugo Foscolo, at my right. There was a good deal of Italian talked. U. Foscolo is a lively, taking man. He is about to publish on Dante, and I offered him a puff in the notes to "Childe Harold." He made one fine observation: that in the age of Dante every man of genius did



1818. something to distinguish himself. Fame acquired any way was the great object; for this reason Dante puts Francesca da Rimini, the daughter of his master, Guido da Polento, in hell, and also his instructor. . . . Fame was the great object, and it was no comparative disgrace—so as Dante made these two persons known—what he did.

R. Wilbraham, talking to me about Sotheby's giving Byron advice, said that old Mr. Davenport, who brought over Rousseau, was asked why he did not set his friend right. "God forbid," said Davenport, "that I should set anybody right."

*March 27.*—Dine with Wilson. Met there Lord Cochrane, Colonel Macirone, and Bruce. Lord Cochrane, a mild, very gentleman-like, agreeable man.

Macirone told us that he was ordered by Fouché to offer to Wellington to give up Buonaparte to him. Marshall, a spy in the pay of the English and French, said, "You may make the offer, but don't be sure of it." Macirone did make the offer, and the Duke of Wellington paid no sort of attention. Fouché delayed Buonaparte's escape as much as possible, in hopes he would be taken. Savary, in his Memoir, says that Fouché would have assassinated Buonaparte had he not gone in disguise in another carriage from Malmaison and by another route. The Imperial carriage was stopped. I doubt this. Caulaincourt was certainly a traitor.



Macirone has heard lately from Madame Murat, who has paid him part of the 40,000 francs. He told me that he got to the top of the conductor on St. Peter's at Rome—four inches of it is solid gold—and to the top of the Cestian Pyramid.

*April 28.*—"Childe Harold" published to-day. God knows what will be the fate of Notes and Illustrations. I have worked like a horse, and perhaps like an ass, at them.

Dine with John Murray, of Albemarle Street, to usher in the birth—poets Moore, "Shiel of the Apostate"; Milman, of "Fazio"; Dr. Black, of "Tasso"; Ellis, of "China," and several others. Mrs. Murray was at the head of the table; we had a most singular evening.

*May 10.*—Dined at Holland House; a large party. Lord Holland not there. Great laughing by Mackintosh, etc., at Major Cartwright translating "*Brevia parlamentaria rediviva*," "Short parliaments revived." I find that Rogers does not like my comparing him to Piedemonte. Lady Holland told me that she thought the Essay hastily written—poor ignoramus! She had complimented me on the Illustrations very much in a note. I know that there are not two people in England capable of appreciating the book, and she has hit on the best part.

I called on a Baron de Bossi a day or two ago. He was prefect at Turin, and a great politician. He told me that the reason why Napoleon signed the peace of Leoben was that Hoche, with 150,000

1818. men, had crossed the Rhine, and therefore Napoleon was afraid he should not have the sole honour of finishing the war ; also that Napoleon was angry when he heard of the revolution at Venice. He complimented me much on the book, and said Byron was a poet that would last. He agreed to assist me in my projected work on the revolutions of Italy.

*May 13.*—I rode over to Holland House this afternoon and saw Lady Holland, who, having offered me anecdotes for the Essay, was reduced to an inscription at the back of a miniature at Holland House, in Alfieri's handwriting.

*May 14.*—At Holland House. Copied the inscription from Alfieri's miniature.

Lord Holland repeated to me an epigram on Kinnaird's Memoir, which turned on the folly of listening to the Duke of Wellington's guarantee :

To all the Duke could say,  
You should have answered, *Ney*.

Went with P. Methuen to the Duchess of Gloucester's rout, where was all London, and such a sight as was never seen. The Duke of Wellington and three Lord Mayors there ; spent the night hustling to get the Misses Byngs and Lady Tavistock to her carriage.

*May 18.*—Lady Holland sent me help for my second edition, "Sublime specchio di veraci detti," which I had before. I did not know what to

do—tell the truth to her and offend her by 1818.  
showing I was aware she had criticised what  
she had never read, or be silent and let her  
find out her own blunder, also to my prejudice.  
I chose the former, and wrote her a note.

*May 21. CAMBRIDGE.*—There is something  
dreadfully depressing in coming down to Cam-  
bridge and seeing the same pursuits by the  
next generation which engaged ourselves. The  
University is getting stricter, I hear. Called  
on Dr. Kaye.

*June 16.*—Met one Aldridge, who had been  
purser in Sir Sidney Smith's ship at the siege  
of Acre, and had lived a great deal with the  
famous Djazzar Pasha. He told us extraordinary  
stories of his ferocity.

Aldridge was present when a Turk was brought  
in for holding communication with the French.  
Djazzar in the utmost rage ordered him to be  
stretched out by four janissaries, tore off his  
shirt, and deliberately beat a hole in the man's  
left side with his tomahawk, which he constantly  
carried.

Aldridge one day found him smoking with  
thirty bleeding heads of Frenchmen set round  
him. The Pasha smiled, and observed that one  
of the heads was powdered like Aldridge.

The Pasha was undauntedly brave whilst the  
cannon and musketry were playing about him;  
he sat cutting watch papers, which he did very  
beautifully.



1818. Buonaparte sent for a suspension of arms to bury the dead and prevent pestilence. Djezzar replied that the wind never blew towards Acre that time of the year.

The Pasha completely exculpated Buonaparte from all the crimes charged to him in Egypt. He praised the extraordinary courage and coolness with which the French entered the breach seventeen times.

*June 30.*—Dined with Burdett. Stephen Lushington there. This is Lady Byron's Dr. Lushington, a nice fellow, I thought.

Monk Lewis is dead. He died on board ship. His servant told my servant that just before he died he wrote his will on his servant's hat. He was returning from Jamaica.

*July 24.* RAMSBURY.—A Mr. Lawson, an Irish gentleman, dined with us to-day. He is come on a scheme of setting up a paper in London for Irish politics. Burdett could not make him understand that under a reform of Parliament Ireland would be as integral a part of the British dominions as Yorkshire. Mr. Lawson seemed to doubt if the English people generally would ever regard the Irish fairly and without jealousy; if so, he has no objection to perpetual union, but if not, I suppose the real object of all Irish patriots to be nothing less than separation.

*July 28.*—Kinnaird and Davies came to-day, to Burdett's great delight.

*August 7.*—Bid Burdett adieu.



*August 11.*—Settled with Henry at Westcliffe Lodge, a pretty house at the west extremity of Brighton. I find all changed since I was at No. 1, Marine Parade with Lord Byron in 1808. 1818.

*August 31.*—Rode down to Ramsbury, changing horses at Reading. Found a Mr. and Lady Charlotte Fitzgerald there, the latter Lord Hastings's sister—both very agreeable people. The former has been in the Navy. He told many horrors of the Irish rebellion.

Lady Charlotte told us one day of a guest at Lord Carrick's, who was shown up to bed by the butler, who laid a horse-whip on the bed saying, "Your honour need give only one crack, and they'll all run away," meaning the rats.

*September 8.*—Burdett, Davies, Moore, and myself walked from twelve to six in the forest, and had a delightful day.

Moore told us he had received £900 already from Longman for his "Fudge Family." He talked of classical subjects, of Parliament, of Payne Knight, and others all equally well. He beat all of us out of the field, and I saw Scrope was envious. I, who have no pretension to conversational powers, was delighted.

*October 3.*—Dined to-day at Mr. Newnham's. Met Hammond, once Secretary at the Foreign Office, and Minister in America. Also Captain d'Este there. He flattered me black and blue.

*October 5.*—Dined with Lord Tavistock. Nobody there but his wife. An agreeable day.

1818.

October 17.—Called and sat with Lady Bessborough, who told me of Sheridan, that when she went to see him three days before his death he put her to sit on a trunk, the only sitting place in the room. Mrs. Sheridan told her not to tell him he was dying. He asked what she thought of his looks. She said his eyes were brilliant still. He then made some frightful answer about their being fixed for eternity. He took her hand and gripped it hard, then he told her that he gave her that token to assure her that, if possible, he would come to her after he was dead. Lady Bessborough was frightened, and said that he had persecuted her all his life, and would now carry his persecution into death. Why should he do so? "Because," said Sheridan, "I am resolved you shall remember me." He said more frightful things, and she withdrew in great terror.

The house was in the hands of bailiffs, who were smoking and playing cards in a room below. Mrs. Sheridan was dying in another room. Lady Bessborough got in by following a bailiff.

She told me she believed Sheridan had more of the devil in him than any man ever had, but owned he was not shabby about money—he did not intend to swindle. He and Miss Linley had each fifty lovers, but were still very jealous of each other. When at Chatsworth they always intercepted the post-bag, and created the most comic confusion.

*October 25.*—Went in the evening to Lady Bessborough's to tea. Met there Richard Wellesley and others, Luttrell amongst them; most agreeable he, but the memorabilia amount to nothing. 1818.

*November 3.*—Set off for London. Arrived at Kinnaird's. Set off walking to go to Hanson's, intending to do some business there, and perhaps leave London that day. Walking opposite to Northumberland House, I heard two fellows saying, "Then we shall have a new election in Westminster." Instantaneously came and went a sort of thought that one day or the other I should be member for Westminster.

I walked on to Hanson's, and there in his clerk's room saw *The Chronicle* with a black-edged paragraph. What, the Queen dead? "No, Sir Samuel Romilly has cut his throat." I hardly knew Romilly; I had no pleasant recollections of him, but the news made me sick instantly, and I could scarcely stand or breathe.

*November 17.*—Went this evening to Lady Oxford's, and heard her wild and charming daughter<sup>1</sup> sing in the Italian fashion.

**Book.**—I took a very active part in the West-

<sup>1</sup> Either Lady Charlotte Mary Harley, the "Ianthé" to whom Byron dedicated the first and second cantos of "*Childe Harold*" (she married, in 1823, Captain Bacon, who had followed "young gallant Howard" in his fatal charge at Waterloo, and afterwards served in Spain, 1828-33, and became a General in the British Army—Lady Charlotte died in 1880), or Lady Jane, who married in 1835 Henry Bickersteth (afterwards Lord Langdale). See vol. i., p. 41.



1818. minster election, when the candidates were Sir Francis Burdett, Sir Samuel Romilly, and Sir Murray Maxwell. This was the summer of 1818. . . .

The return of Sir Samuel Romilly gave a temporary revival to the Whig party, which, since the days of Mr. Fox, could scarcely be said to exist. The lamented death of that excellent man caused a vacancy, and one evening, being at my father's country-house, I received a very short note from Sir Francis Burdett, asking me whether I would be member for Westminster. On receiving my answer the Committee took the requisite measures, and I was formally proposed at a large general meeting of that body.<sup>1</sup> In those days vacancies were not filled until the next meeting of Parliament, and a long

<sup>1</sup> The letter I received on the occasion is as follows :

*"Tuesday, November 17, 1818.*

"SIR,

"I am desired by the Committee appointed at the public meeting of the electors of Westminster, held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, this day, to announce to you the following resolution, passed at that meeting by an immense majority :

"Resolved :

"That John Hobhouse, Esq., from his known talents and character, is a fit and proper person to represent the City of Westminster in Parliament, and that he be accordingly put in nomination at the ensuing election."

"I am also further directed to assure you that the most prompt and vigorous measures will be pursued to carry into effect the wishes of the electors above expressed, to secure your return to Parliament for the City and Liberty of Westminster.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

*"(Chairman) SAMUEL BROOKS."*



interval occurred before the election. The Whig electors for some time appeared to acquiesce in the choice of the Committee, and there was every appearance of my unopposed return for the city. But this was not to be. . . . I was to be put forward as a reformer, and an opponent, rather than a friend, of the regular Parliamentary Opposition. 1818.

The consequence was what I had foreseen. The Committee that had acted for Sir Samuel Romilly was revived, and Mr. George Lamb, a brother of Lord Melbourne's, was selected to oppose me. The contest, which lasted fifteen days, was a bitter contest, just as might be expected from neighbours. I was beaten, and amongst my most active antagonists were two personages of whom I was afterwards to be a colleague in the Cabinet. I did my best, and although I had but very few friends, those friends were very useful and active. Mr. Bentham made me tenant of one of his houses, in order to enable me to be a candidate. Such was the mistake of the day. Mr. Bickersteth, afterwards Lord Langdale, Mr. Douglas Kinnaird, and, above all, Sir Francis Burdett, stood by me manfully; and I had no reason to regret the effort, except that for a time the great and little men of the party chose to forget that I had ever been their associate. This was disagreeable, but it was bearable, and the separation did not last long. Besides which, defeat, instead of discouraging my Westminster friends, made

1818. them more zealous ; and the usual demonstration—a public dinner at the usual place, the Crown and Anchor, in the Strand—helped to keep us alive.

Sir Francis Burdett presided, and nearly three hundred electors were at the dinner. In each plate was a printed copy of verses, which, although not so good as the “Pilot that weathered the Storm,”<sup>1</sup> did well enough for the occasion.

The mortal poet who wrote them was colleague during several Parliaments of Sir Francis Burdett ; and, although in the latter years of the worthy Baronet’s life they did not sit on the same side of the House, nor saw much of each other, their friendship was never interrupted ; nor was there any symptom that they had lost any portion of their mutual esteem.

DIARY. *November 22.*—Walked on the Steyne with Mr. Campbell. He told me that Ferdinand of Spain was not the fool he was thought to be. His mother used to say of him, “Of all my children, Fernando has the most talent and the most malignity.” Nor did Campbell think him really superstitious, though a cruel, bigoted actor in religion. He is not a coward ; he quelled a mob by a few words, but he stands upon the priesthood, and Campbell thinks the basis will fail.

<sup>1</sup> A song composed by Canning, to be sung on William Pitt’s birthday, May 28, 1802. It achieved a great success. (See “George Canning and his Friends.” Edited by Captain Bagot, vol. i., pp. 190, 419.)

*December 2.*—Letter from Byron announcing two new poems coming for me—"Don Juan" and "Mazeppa." 1818.

*December 23.*—Spoke to my father on Lord Byron's affairs. Hanson is returned. Byron has left everything to Kinnaird and myself. I wish my father to be present at our first interview with Hanson. I hear from Byron frequently; he is going to send on three poems to me, "Don Juan," "Mazeppa," an "Ode to Venice." Lord Lauderdale is the bearer. I am desired by Byron to show them to T. Moore, Rose, Frere, and D. Kinnaird, and I am to settle the price with Murray, if he likes to publish; if he does not, with another.

*December 26.*—Found Byron's poems had arrived.

*December 27.*—S. B. Davies breakfasted with me. We read the poems. I have my doubts about "Don Juan"; the blasphemy and bawdry and the domestic facts overpower even the great genius it displays. Of "Mazeppa" and the "Ode" I do not think much. Murray called and wanted to advertise at once. I told him I was not sure about the publication. I wrote to Byron on Friday last.

*December 28.*—I dined at D. Kinnaird's with my father and Hanson. The meeting was assembled to hear Hanson's report of Lord Byron's affairs. I had begged my father might be present. The whole went off very satisfactorily. Hanson read



1818, a note in which he proposed a composition with Byron's simple contract creditors; but he stated that his own bill, amounting to £12,000 in all, was not to be docked, so that, in fact, the other creditors were to provide means of paying him. I did not say this, but I told the objection I had to composition; and as Lord Byron had left that in Kinnaird's hands and mine, it was decided against. We resolved also that as there would be something over the above still remaining, say £4,000, to pay, Hanson should be the man to wait for the money.

The estate sold for 90,000 guineas, £66,000 is in trust for Lady Byron, £12,000 Jew debts, for which there are judgments, so that with Hanson's bill (of which £2,800 has been paid), there will be but little left to compound for.

However, Lord Byron will have a net £3,300 a year, and will start with £3,000 interest of the purchase-money since April. Wildman (Major), the purchaser, is the son of an attorney, with £10,000 a year, of which he has sunk the purchase-money of Newstead, and is going to live on £2,000 a year, intending to lay out the remaining income on repairs of the Abbey.

He made two requests to Lord Byron, one, that he might have leave to copy Sir John Byron's picture, and the other that he might send an artist to Venice to take Lord Byron's portrait. Lord Byron sent a handsome answer by Hanson.

We said nothing to Hanson about his own bill,



having previously agreed to be silent on that head, but Hanson let drop that he had securities for it, meaning the Rochdale papers. 1818.

Lord Bryon, in a letter written jointly to me and Kinnaird, says that when Lady Noel dies he wishes Sir F. Burdett, Lord Grenville, or Lord Grey, to arbitrate about the division of the Wentworth estate between him and Lady Byron. His letter on his affairs to us was very sensible.

December 29.—I called on Hookham Frere, and had a long conversation with him about Byron's "Don Juan." He was decisively against publication, and gave some excellent reasons. First, "A friend of freedom should be a friend to morality." Second, there was preparing a convulsion between the religionists and free-thinkers. The first would triumph and the latter be extirpated with their works. He instanced Hall Stevenson, a fashionable rake writer once in great vogue, who was put down by common consent of the moral readers of George II.'s time, and is now forgotten, though excellent in its way.

He said that Byron should not attack his wife, because she and her family forbore all attack as he could witness, having been for two months with Sir R. and Lady Noel at Tunbridge, when they never mentioned him except once, and that *en passant* talking about "Beppo" and "Whistlecraft."

I felt that I was talking in some sort to a

1818. rival of "Don Juan's" style; but then, as what he said was sensible, I did not care for the coincidence. Frere said of B.'s attack on Southey and others that it did not sink people already so placed, but it might sink Lord Byron. He had begun by writing a satire which he had suppressed; might he not suppress this also in time? On the whole, Frere was convincing. He said of "Mazeppa" that parts were good, but it was too long, notwithstanding the excuse at the end, of the King having been asleep an hour. Of the "Ode" he liked the beginning. I told Kinnaird Frere's opinion, and Kinnaird was converted.

I wrote to Lord Byron to-day, telling him that we had met on his affairs, and that I would write soon about his poems. I had a very kind letter from him about the election.

1819. *January 2.*—Called on Murray. Told him my feelings about "Don Juan." He acquiesced, and I suppose is not sorry to be off from the violence and the attack on Bob Southey, although he tells me he dislikes Southey.

✓ *January 8.*—I wrote a long letter to Byron advising him not to publish "Don Juan." Sent it on Tuesday, having read it to Murray and to Kinnaird, and part to Davies. All agree with me, and Frere said stronger things to Murray than he did to me. The attacks on the wife, the bawdry and the blasphemy, as it is called, are the reasons. I trust he will listen to me.

It is a very ticklish affair, and most likely Byron will refer to Rogers or to Moore, who, being bepraised therein, will advise publication. 1819.

*February 1.*—Tom Moore breakfasted with me and read "Don Juan." He perfectly agreed with me it could not be published, and told me to tell Byron his opinion.

*April 6.*—I read aloud part of a thing called "The Vampyre," said to be written by Byron, but which, I am positive, was for the most part written by Polidori.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the story and a word or two here and there may be Byron's.

*April 21.*—Byron has written to Murray resolving on publication, and to me; also a second canto of "Don Juan" sent.

*May 1.*—"Don Juan" going through the press. I do not think it so bad or so good as I did, not so indecent or so clever.

*May 4.*—I have got into a correspondence with Polidori about "The Vampyre," which he wrote and got vamped up, and then attributed to Lord Byron. I knew it was Polidori's.<sup>1</sup> Murray sent me a letter from the editor of it, giving up Polidori. I wrote to Polidori about it; he returned for answer that he had never said the tale was Byron's, it was entirely his own. There appears a letter in the papers attributing only the groundwork to Lord Byron, and not the tale

<sup>1</sup> "The Vampyre" appeared in *The New Monthly Magazine* for April 1819, with the name of Lord Byron as the author. On May 5 a letter appeared in *The Courier* from Dr. Polidori, who acknowledged the authorship of the work.



1819. in its present form. I remonstrated with the doctor on this, and now he sends an insolent letter.

*May 14.*—Correcting “Don Juan,” second canto, which I really do not think clever, at least not for Byron.

*June 12.*—This day went to Murray’s and found Kinnaird had just bargained to give 2,000 guineas for “Don Juan,” “Mazeppa,” and the “Ode.” Lord Byron is determined to publish, at all events anonymously. I have given due warning and can do no more.

*July 1.*—Writing and correcting Byron’s “Don Juan.” “Mazeppa” is making a great noise. Now suppose any one else had written it. It contains certainly some fine passages, but I cannot make out what Byron means by tacking a poor piece of prose to the end of his volume.

*September 8.*—Wrote to Byron, from whom I had a letter, in which he talks of coming to England in the spring, or going to South America.

*November 5.* RAMSBURY.—At dinner Craven told a story of an Irishman of consequence who changed his religion to get an estate. His conversion made a noise. A sort of synod was held to receive his recantation—the Archbishop of Dublin present. My apostate comes into the room; says the A., “What do you come for?” “To get my estate.” “Ay, that of course; but what is the immediate object?” “To renounce



my religion." A. "The error of it, you mean." 1819.  
"Yes, transubstantiation and the Trinity." A.  
"No, no, not the Trinity." "Well, well, your  
Grace knows best: I renounce whatever your  
Grace pleases."

BOOK.—Shortly before my loss of the election I became a member of a political society which was called, after Harrington's Club, the Rota. Amongst the members, besides Sir Francis and myself, were Sir John Throgmorton and his brother, Sir Robert Wilson, Mr. Michael Bruce, Mr. Bickersteth, Mr. Douglas Kinnaird; and Lord Byron wrote from Italy to say he wished to join us. We were permitted to bring guests with previous notice. We dined together once a fortnight during the sitting of Parliament, read essays, concocted plans of reform, framed resolutions to be moved in Parliament, and drew up addresses for Parliamentary candidates. We were all Parliamentary reformers, but were by no means agreed as to the extent or general character of the change which ought to be made in the representative system. The term Radical, used as a substantive, had not yet come into use, but was commonly applied as an epithet; and I recollect that the member of our society who in those days seemed determined to be satisfied with nothing short of Radical Reform, was that one of our associates who afterwards became member for Southwark. The address of that gentleman

1819. to his constituency was concocted at our Rota. So also were the Resolutions which were moved by Sir Francis Burdett in the House of Commons in 1818. Our club also gave birth to a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> which made a good deal of noise at the time, and which was occasioned by an intemperate speech of Mr. Canning in 1818, or, rather, by an intemperate expression in that speech. We were exceedingly indignant at his attack on the Reformers, and resolved to make the most of his indiscretion. Accordingly it was resolved that some of us should write a commentary upon it, and that what was judged to be the best and most effective should be published. Two or three specimens were produced at our next meeting, and the approved essay, called "A Letter to George Canning," was printed and published by Messrs. Ridgway. Mr. Canning fell into a very common error. Having committed one indiscretion, he sought to retrieve it by committing another. He wrote a letter to be delivered to the author of the anonymous pamphlet, and sent it to Messrs. Ridgway. The letter was couched in very furious language, and concluded by telling the pamphleteer that he only wanted the courage to be an assassin; as if assassination was a proof of courage. This silly letter was sent by me to *The Examiner*, and published in that paper, with a recommendation to Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Canning's side of this dispute is fully stated in "George Canning and his Friends," edited by Capt. Bagot, vol. ii., pp. 78-81.

Canning that he should turn it into his anti- 1819.  
Jacobin doggerel. Thus the affair ended, to the  
no small amusement of the members of the Rota.  
Mr. Canning, however, made other efforts to  
discover the author of the letter, for, suspecting  
Sir Philip Francis to be the writer, he asked  
the question of that celebrated gentleman, who  
answered in the negative, and asked for some  
favour.

The Westminster Reformers having taken me  
up, I became to a certain degree their champion,  
and engaged accordingly in a controversy with Lord  
Erskine, who, in a pamphlet called "A Defence of  
the Whigs," had assailed my intended constituents.  
My reply was called "A Trifling Mistake," in  
reference to an error in Lord Erskine's pamphlet.  
But a much more serious blunder was made by  
a member of Parliament, who mistook a note  
of interrogation for an interjection, and accused  
the writer of the pamphlet of inciting the people  
to be guilty of personal violence, and repeat the  
exploit of the Protector Oliver. The publisher  
of the pamphlet, being summoned to the Bar of  
the House of Commons, was authorised by me  
to disclose the name of the author; and a friend  
of mine, without my authority or any communica-  
tion with me, proposed that I should be spared  
the annoyance of an interrogation at the Bar,  
and that whatever was to be done on the occasion  
should be done at once. The ceremony of asking  
me to confirm or deny what had been confessed



1819. by my publisher and volunteered by my friend was accordingly dispensed with; and I had no opportunity of showing that the offensive sentence had been misinterpreted, and, moreover, had been altered by the person who conveyed my manuscript to the press. The latter fact I should not perhaps have adduced, although it much added to the injustice of condemning me without a hearing. The House of Commons voted the pamphlet a libel and a breach of privilege, and condemned me to imprisonment in Newgate. Sixty-five members voted against this sentence, and the minority was chiefly composed of Whigs. The member who proposed the imprisonment was Mr. Courtenay, afterwards Earl of Devon.

During this imprisonment I had addresses presented to me from Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, and other cities. I had apartments in the Governor's house, and saw as many friends as I liked, so that I had not much to complain of in the way of actual restraint. But I considered myself illegally dealt with, and did not admit that I had violated any of the privileges of the House of Commons. Accordingly I moved for a writ of Habeas Corpus, and, assisted by Mr. Bickersteth and other legal friends, prepared an argument in support of my application. In due course I was brought before the Court of King's Bench. The Judges—Abbott, Best, Holroyd, and Bayley—did not give themselves or me much trouble. They asked me what course I intended



to pursue. I answered that I had several 1819.  
objections to urge, the chief being that I disputed the validity of the warrant of committal. They looked at the warrant, and after a short consultation delivered their opinion *seriatim*—that opinion being that the courts of law had no power to deal with the privileges of Parliament. But the real question was whether the privileges of Parliament extended to my case. I thought they did not, and I think so still; but I shall say no more on this matter, as I published the argument which the Judges declined to hear, together with a short account of the proceedings that led to my committal.

## CHAPTER XII

1820. DIARY. *January 30.*—NEWGATE. George IV. on the throne, his father having died last night at half-past eight o'clock. Well, we shall see. All my labours will be nullified almost by the King's death, for in the universal hubbub who will care about the Habeas Corpus? So no good will be done. Still, I have gained knowledge on this subject, and that is worth something. The bell of St. Paul's now tolling for the late King. I go on my way; it makes no difference to me.

*February 12.*—Anniversary of my nomination for Westminster. Whilst I was employed about my argument Place and Puller came in, and presented a letter to me. I found that it announced my having been chosen last night, at a meeting of electors of Westminster, as a fit person to be put up in nomination for the City and Liberty of Westminster.

I was not much elated with the news, having my apprehensions, and, moreover, being much more indifferent than formerly to the honour of representing Westminster. I hear, however, that everything looks prosperous.

*February 13.*—Sir Robert Wilson dined with

me alone. He finds that the aristocratic system here prevents any equality between men of very unequal fortunes. He is disgusted with the little figure he has made in the House, and, said he, "You will be sick of it in half a year." 1820.

He said that he was the only general officer that rode following the retreat of the French from Moscow, and that the Emperor Alexander spoke to him about it, and said he wished his officers would follow his example. The Emperor himself did.

*February 15.*—Note from Richter saying that the Ministers all resigned their places last night, after a quarrel with the King!

Ellice called. He says the rumour is strong, also that King George is mad, and must die soon.

Murray and Foscolo dined with me. Foscolo made some very shrewd observations about England. He mentioned two singularities: one that when a Ministry came in, all their friends, old and young, rich and poor, think themselves neglected if they have no places—*e.g.* old Wilbraham thought it hard Fox did not give him something. I answered that it was not the love of place so much as the fear of being thought a person whom it was not worth while to secure. He agreed.

Wilbraham made love to Lady Holland, when Lady Webster. She gave him a box on the ear, and his cheek rings with it now. Foscolo agreed with me that vanity is the great mover of many men.

*February 16.*—The King George III. buried

1820. to-day. A great fog. A very good thing when all the stuff *The Times* inserts about George III. is done with. One would think he was a Marcus Aurelius; but this is the way *The Times* preserves the mass of its readers and strikes the balance, so as to be enabled to attack the Ministry and acts of tyranny.

*February 24.*—This morning in *The Times* Arthur Thistlewood proclaimed a traitor and a murderer, and £1,000 reward offered for him. Also a denunciation of high treason against those who harbour him. This is against law. A man must be arraigned or convicted before it is high treason to harbour him. People coming in the morning tell the whole story—a plot to murder the Ministers at a Cabinet dinner. The conspirators met in a stable in Cato Street, Edgware Road; they fought desperately. Thistlewood killed one Smithers, a Bow Street officer. He was taken in bed this morning about half-past nine.

*February 26.*—Sat down and wrote an address to the electors, which Place says is most excellent, Bickersteth admirable, and Burdett capital. I think it is good.

*February 28.*—About half-past four Mr. Hardy, Clerk of the Papers to the Keeper, came and presented a letter, telling me at the same time *I was at liberty*, the doors were open to me. The letter merely stated that the House had been prorogued.



Packed up letters, etc., sent my address to the Westminster electors, and at half-past five p.m., after shaking hands with Mr. Brown, *I repassed the door of Newgate*, got on my horse, and trotted away. 1820.

Such has been the close of my imprisonment of eleven weeks, all but one day. I was imprisoned for saying that if the soldiers did not protect the House of Commons the members of that House would be pulled out of it by the ears. I was imprisoned by the offended party without a trial, without being heard, without being even seen; and this monstrous injustice has been committed with the approval, or at least without the opposition, of many of those who call themselves, and are called, the friends of popular rights, but who think that some such power should reside in the House of Commons. Several of my friends—Ellice, for instance—thought thus. I gave in the names of a dozen gentlemen who might act as stewards at the dinner to be given to me. They all contrived to refuse, upon one pretext or the other. Ellice said it would hurt his interest at Coventry; so that it is to the people alone that any man can trust for the assertion of popular rights. An advocate of the people will have few or no coadjutors. It is well if even the people themselves understand him.

*March 2.*—Went with Sir Francis Burdett to the Crown and Anchor. Received in a most affectionate manner by all my Westminster

1820. friends. The most respectable company (about 450) ever assembled at dinner there, met me. Everything passed off most agreeably.

[ *March 18.*—Lady Caroline Lamb is come to town and is in mischievous activity.

*March 25.*—Arriving at Covent Garden found an immense multitude. Saw all our flags and placarded boards moving up covered with laurel, all announcing victory. The shabby Whigs had put out false numbers at two o'clock, by which I was headed, but the polling was small on both sides.

An enormous crowd almost prevented me from reaching the hustings. When I came and showed myself at the close of the poll, I was most loudly cheered. The great multitude in perfect good humour, and not the slightest injury done to any one. The numbers were :

Burdett	.	.	.	254	5,327
Hobhouse	.	.	.	224	4,882
Lamb.	.	.	.	225	4,436

Thus has concluded the Westminster election; and thus at the age of thirty-three, and never before having been in Parliament, have I been chosen; without great family, or fortune, or friends, or any help except from my own exertions on behalf of reform, to represent the City of Westminster; to represent the constituents of Fox and Burdett, the most enlightened, the most independent, and the most numerous body

of electors in the kingdom. I shall not congratulate myself upon this event until I know what I have done to justify the great expectations raised of me. I am sure I have gained character by this election. I hope I shall lose none in the House of Commons. 1820.

A vile toothache comes to remind me I am mortal!

*March 27.*—In the evening came the Persian Ambassador. He is a lively, simple-mannered, gentlemanly person.

He is writing his account of his travels, which are to be published in Paris. He intends to expose this Government. He said, "Good people, but never saw such a Government in my life." He said he had written thirty-two notes to Castlereagh without an answer. Castlereagh gone hunting, or else when he did see Castlereagh, my Lord in a hurry to go and answer the Opposition. He perfectly understood how matters went here: King no power; Castlereagh or Lady Castlereagh to be consulted; House of Commons take up all Ministers' time.

It should be told that the Ambassador has had seventy of his own family put to death, and narrowly escaped himself.

*April 16.*—A letter from Murray, enclosing a copy of Byron's ballad. Very bad and wanton indeed, but signed, "Infidus Scurra," the name we used to give to Scrope Davies.

I am exceedingly unwilling to record this



1820. proof of the nature of my friend. He thought me in prison; he knew me attacked by all parties and pens; he resolved to give his kick too, and in so doing he alluded to my once having belonged to a Whig Club at Cambridge. Now I believe this to be perversity as much as anything, and to have arisen from mistaking the nature of my imprisonment and the line of popular politics which I have thought it my duty to adopt. Yet for a man to give way to such a mere itch of writing against one who has stood by him in all his battles, and never refused a single friendly office, is a melancholy proof of want of feeling. It has at any rate affected the mirage through which I have long looked at this singular man, and I know not that it is in the power of any suite of circumstances hereafter to make me think of him again exactly as I thought of him before. "Sic extorta voluptas."

Murray received the ballad with this direction: "Give the enclosed song to Hobhouse. I know he will never forgive me, but I cannot help it. I have no patience with him and his ragamuffins for getting him into quod. As he is now in the Flash Capital he will know what I mean."

A mutilated copy of the song got into *The Morning Post* with this heading: "Written by a Noble Poet of the First Poetical Eminence on his Friend and Annotator."

This affair made me very uncomfortable indeed.



To be written about thus by a man in whom I had "garnered up my heart!" I know of nothing worse in life. 1820.

Resolved not to mention the circumstance to any other of my family, or to any friend but Burdett.

*April 20.*—I have had a letter from Byron, in which he talks of the song, I think half ashamed, and very friendly and kind, poor fellow, in every respect. Write to Byron, telling him he is a "shabby fellow," and leaving him to chew that phrase without any other comment.

BOOK.—"On April 22, in the year 1820, I took my seat in the House of Commons, and I continued a member of that assembly, with the exception of a year and a quarter, for thirty years."

DIARY. *April 24.*—Burdett and I dined at Kinnaird's, and then went to see Kean act Lear—a wonderful performance; but Tate and Garrick have made this astonishing tragedy end like a fairy tale.

*April 27.*—King opened Parliament. No hissing, no applause. There was such a rush of members with the Speaker into the House of Lords that I did not strive to get in. Walked about with Kinnaird. Went down to the House, sat behind on Bankes's bench. Heard Knatchbull and Wilmot move and second the Address. One

1820. talked of *reducing* the country, the other called the Reformers revolutionists. Wilmot's was a miserable performance indeed. Tierney was very bad; he said he was as much against machinations as anybody, and praised the *forbearance and temperance!* of the mover and seconder, and hoped the House would be always equally unanimous.

Burdett rose. I ran up into the gallery opposite, having agreed if he moved an amendment to second it, but Burdett only said he would not disturb unanimity, but must differ from every sentiment of the Address, except those of condolence and congratulation. The Whigs were very glad this was done, although Tierney had made such a shabby speech, and several said, "That's right."

May 1.—Thistlewood, Ings, Brunt, Davidson, and Tidd executed this morning at the Old Bailey. Their heads were cut off by a man in a mask. The people hissed violently during the operation. Soldiers were in readiness everywhere. The men died like heroes. Ings, perhaps, was too obstreperous in singing "Death or liberty," and Thistlewood said, "Be quiet, Ings; we can die without all this noise."

They admitted they intended to kill the Ministers, but without malice, and as the only resource. It is certain that Edwards, a Government spy, was the chief instigator of the whole scheme. The people cried out for him during the

execution. The Government will gain nothing by this execution. 1820.

I went down to the House and sat there some time.

Dined with Cuthbert. Burdett, Lord Thanet, and Bainbridge there. Three of the company had been in jail—Lord Thanet, Burdett, and I.

I walked about a long time with Burdett, talking over the fate and conduct of the men who died this morning.

*May 2.*—House of Commons. Alderman Wood moved, by Brougham's advice, to bring Edwards to the Bar of the House for a breach of privilege, he having proposed to blow up the House of Commons. There was a discussion. Brougham actually spoke against Wood's motion, and *defended* the use of spies. Canning said he would be willing to rest the use of spies, not only here, but in all civilised countries, on Brougham's defence! Wood withdrew his motion.

I burnt with indignation. I had half a mind to get up and attack Brougham, and I found my feelings common to others. Tavistock was at my right hand: he told me that when his father was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland the use of spies was recommended to him, and he was told he could not carry on the Government without them. He would not employ them, and did very well. I was horror-struck at Brougham, and walking home with Sir R. Wilson, I found him also disgusted.

*May 6.*—Saw O'Meara to-day. He told me



1820. that Buonaparte praised my book on the "Hundred Days" very much, and prepared a comment upon it, which he thought of sending to me. He mentioned several things that Buonaparte told him; amongst others that Talleyrand advised him to assassinate all the Bourbons in England, there being persons who would undertake them at a million francs a head, and drag them to France or kill them. . . .

O'Meara brought me a letter of congratulation from Count Las Casas. The Count tells me that when Buonaparte heard him read my book he said, "Voilà les libelles finies, les bons livres vont commencer."

*May 17.*—Went with Burdett and Robert Knight to Court; introduced to King George IV. by lord-in-waiting, and kissed his hand. He said not a word to me, but spoke to Burdett.

*May 19.*—Lord J. Russell's motion for disfranchising Grampound and giving representation to Leeds. Castlereagh declared against latter. So ends this pernicious trifling, as *The Examiner* calls it. I spoke a few words at the end of the debate, putting in the claim of Radicals as not being *bigots*, and thanking Lord John for what little he had done. When I sat down he turned round and said, "Thank ye."

*June 8.*—Called on Murray to-day, and told him my opinion about Byron's poems in MS. Heard from Byron a day or two ago. He excuses his ballad but poorly, I think.



*June 28.*—House of Commons. Heard Charles Grant make an excellent speech against extemporary laws of violence, which were proposed by Daly, the member for Galway—Vezey Fitzgerald and others, Irish country gentlemen, ultras. Castlereagh made a Whig speech. J. W. Wood told me that this was a Peelite conspiracy against Charles Grant. Negatived without a division. 1820.

*July 25.*—Walked down with Tavistock to the House of Commons. He told me that his father said the British monarchy was at an end. Owned that all were in great alarm.

Went with Kinnaird and his brother to little theatre, and saw Madame Vestris act Lady Macbeth. I was delighted.

I saw Castlereagh in back row of public box, over the way, smiling and clapping. Some of the company recognised me and cried, "Hobhouse for ever." I ran back and kept out of sight. This was worth something for Castlereagh. I do not know how it was, but I rather liked to see the man unbending. Morris, the proprietor, came into our box, and told me that Lady Castlereagh had been to see the opera three nights running.

*July 26.*—House of Commons adjourned until August 21.

BOOK.—I came into Parliament too late in life to be a frequent or ready speaker, but I did pretty well on such occasions as I chose for

1820. myself. My Westminster mission was to advocate the cause of Parliamentary Reform, and I did so to the best of my abilities. But I took up other questions with some success, and more particularly applied myself to three objects—the shortening the hours of infant labour, the opening metropolitan vestries, and modifying the Quarantine Laws. I was for several years employed on the Factory Bill, and passed an Act which reduced the hours of labour for children under a certain age. That question was afterwards taken up by Mr. Sadler and others, who carried their interference much further than I thought it prudent to go. Indeed, the principle on which I proceeded was solely applicable to those who were not of an age at which they could dispose of their own labour. Such infants I thought entitled to legal protection, and such is the opinion of most people now. It was not so when I began my labours. Infinite pains I took to reconcile the views of the masters and the workmen on the matter; and it was not until after much correspondence and repeated interviews that I brought the parties to something like a compromise.

I had also a great deal of trouble and much opposition to encounter before I could pass the Vestry Bill which goes by my name. The managers of the close vestries, of course, took part against me, and the clerical members of these bodies were particularly adverse. However,

the Bill passed, and I believe that it has produced very beneficial effects—not uniformly the same effects, for much, naturally, must depend upon the character of the parish and its previous condition. For example, in the great parish of St. George, Westminster, it worked admirably from the beginning; in Marylebone not so well. On the whole, however, the representative system has proved to be applicable to parish government; and the Vestries Act was no bad pilot-balloon for the great Act of 1832. 1820.

I had very strong convictions in regard to the pernicious effects of the Quarantine Laws, and, after much reading and consulting with those who had studied them, I resolved to make an effort for their repeal. Accordingly I gave notice of a motion for that purpose. Here, however, I was met by an opposition which I could not encounter with any chance of success. The medical profession, with few exceptions, was most hostile to the proposal; and some of my most intimate political friends strongly objected to it; for example, Mr. Warburton. But what determined me to abandon my intention was the private request of Mr. Huskisson, then President of the Board of Trade, who told me that he quite agreed with my views, but that the professional opposition to the repeal would be insurmountable, and would cause a derangement of the shipping interest. Mr. Huskisson added that Sir Robert Peel, then Home Secretary, was of his opinion



1820. also, and both Sir Robert and himself would feel personally obliged if I would allow my motion to drop.

When I first came into Parliament Latin quotations were very common, and Horace especially was most unmercifully brought into play. A very respectable county member actually hazarded the *justum et tenacem propositi virum*, and no one even smiled, much less laughed. Such small erudition would now be received with shouts of laughter. Of course, with dexterity, a well-known phrase may be introduced, but even this requires more than common prudence. Lord Chatham began one of his sentences, "Your Lordships have all read Thucydides," and then proceeded to quote in a translation the passage he wanted. I much doubt whether Lord Chatham himself had ever read the original historian; but the House of Lords seldom laughs.

It would be difficult to find a more apt quotation than Lord Chatham's famous

Tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo,  
Projice tela manu.

But a more ingenious adaptation was, in my opinion, made by Sir Francis Burdett. Mr. Canning, defending the old Borough system, reminded the House that it had "grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength."



Sir Francis, in reply, said, "The right honourable gentleman, quoting a favourite poet, has said that this system has 'grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength.' He remembered, doubtless, although he did not quote, the preceding line of the distich :

"The young disease which must subdue at length,  
Grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength."

This was in the debate of 1818 on Parliamentary Reform. I was not then a member of the House, but I was in the gallery, and I well recollect the great impression made by this most happy rejoinder. Mr. Canning himself nodded approbation.

DIARY. *July 28.*—Went in the London Engineer steam yacht to Margate—270 people on board—a magnificent spectacle altogether. A few years ago I recollect laughing at the notion of applying steam to these purposes.

*July 31.*—Set out at eight in the *Eclipse* steam yacht. Beautiful sight leaving the shore—boats, spectators, and bands of music on board the yachts playing. We arrived by this extraordinary mode of making progress at Tower Stairs, quarter to four in the afternoon, passing by all sailing boats as if they were at anchor. I admired the *Eclipse's* engines much more than the other—more compact. The vessel has made the passage in six hours and a half—88 miles by water;

1820. passage money, 15s.; music, 1s.; sailors, 1s. Eighty passengers pay the expenses. All above—profit.

Met on board Chabot of Malta. He told me I was not altered since 1810. Congratulated me on my eminence. We shall see if it is a subject of congratulation.

*August 1.*—Walked to Chantrey's. Saw him. He as clever as usual. Told me he was thinking of a Satan for Lord Egremont; that Bankes, M.P., had told him that he had been thinking of his design—that Chantrey would fail. Chantrey agreed. "But," said Bankes, "you had better choose some part of Satan's history, and so make your work more easy; take, for instance, his conflict with *sin and death!*" Chantrey told me this as a real fact. The proposition was made in hearing of a large learned party. I told him of Bankes having written a thirteenth book of the *Æneid*, to complete that epic in which he married *Æneas* to *Lavinia*.

*August 2.*—I read part of Ramsay's "American Revolution." The description of Washington's resignation of his command after his victory made me cry like a child. I find that the names Whig and Tory are given to the Republicans and Royalists as familiar epithets.

*August 18.*—I rode down to House of Lords. Was cheered by people as I passed the barrier, where the constables on horseback were drawn up. The military array there most striking.

Went on the throne. House of Lords well contrived for Queen's business. 1820.

The Duke of Wellington was much annoyed at being hissed yesterday. The Duke of York was much cheered both days, notwithstanding his conduct is so decisive. This is meant, I suppose, merely to spite the King.

*September 7.*—Great eclipse of the sun—a fine day to see it. When at the greatest obscuration, a little after two p.m., I observed that the streets of London looked as if in moonlight. There will not be so considerable an eclipse again until 1847. If I should live so long, how shall I look back upon the days of this eclipse?

Rode up to London. Saw every one looking into pails of water and through burnt glasses. I rode back to Whitton. Daniel Moore, the astronomer, dined there with the Napiers of Whitton. Moore talked of the eclipse. He mentioned that Davy once believed that the stones which fell from the sky were formed in the air, but he now denies he ever held that doctrine. He did to me.

*September 9.*—Set off with my father for Easton Grey. My father one of the most agreeable men I ever travelled with.

*September 10.*—Spent the day at Smith's. Mr. Thomas, the Malmesbury attorney, dined with us. Smith told me that, dining at Lord Suffolk's this year he met Lord Lansdowne, who told him the following story:



1820. Lord Lansdowne was looking at Copley's picture of the death of Chatham at the British Institution, when he was interrupted by Lord Sidmouth, who said, "Perhaps you do not know the immediate cause of Lord Chatham's being taken ill. Lord Chatham was accustomed to take with him to the House of Lords a bottle of julep, which he swallowed just before he spoke. This day he heard the Duke of Richmond's speech with great anxiety, swaying up and down, as was his custom, and waiting eagerly to see him sit down. Just as the Duke seemed closing his speech, Lord Chatham put his hand to his pocket for the julep. He missed it. The Duke sat down. Lord Chatham kept fumbling for the draught, and could not find it, but in his eagerness rose up to speak. The anxiety, increased by missing his medicine, made him fall back in a fit. He told Dr. Addington so, and added, he found he had put the julep in the wrong pocket."

Lord Lansdowne's observation was: "What a strange man Lord Sidmouth must be to volunteer such an anecdote. If Canning had got hold of the julep, what a story for him!" My father owned that Sidmouth was very loose and rimose in his talk, even about State matters, in company.

*October 20.*—Letter from Byron. He is a Queen's man. It is satisfactory to think that the Italians who set out with thinking the Queen guilty now think her innocent. He sent me some



intelligence, which I sent to *The Times*. Desires 1820.  
me to read his new tragedy, *Marino Faliero*.

*October 30.*—Set off for Battle Abbey, having received messages from Sir Godfrey Webster and from the Duke of Sussex, through Kinnaird and Cullen, requesting me to join the party at the Abbey.

*October 31.*—Saw the flag flying on Battle Tower. Entered this fine old place. The hall magnificent—a great picture of the Battle of Hastings covering one end.

Webster came and welcomed me as an old college acquaintance should. He abused the Whigs of his county; said that the Cavendishes might have carried him and Charles Cavendish for £15,000, whereas they spent £23,000 to lose one seat. Webster says he can command seven or eight hundred votes as long as he sticks to Reform. He is an odd man—it may be said, half a madman. He sits up ordinarily all night, smoking and reading, and lies in bed until six in the evening.

Whilst dressing Burdett arrived. Great and mutual salutations. He looked very well. Cullen also came, and Kinnaird.

Introduced by the Duke of Sussex to Lady Webster—a very charming woman. The party were those mentioned: Lady Cecilia Buggins, Mr. Keppel, and Mr. Gore—the Duke's aides, and Lady Hannah Ellice.

Our dinner was most magnificent. French,

1820. and wines to satiety, gold plate, etc., but all in an odd way. Only one family servant in livery. The conversation very easy, and not perhaps quite reserved enough. The Duke's harsh, loud, high voice not heard so much as I could have wished, for he is a well-informed man, quite Liberal, and now begins to be Radical.

The Duke was vastly good-humoured. Very attentive to the M.P.'s for Westminster, though not so familiar with them as with the others. Sir F. Burdett did not speak much. The Duke evidently tried to give us materials for attack on Ministers in our den.

*November 1.*—We went out shooting. The Duke joined in his carriage, and was then lifted on a grey pony—a jäger carried two guns. He put a pipe in his mouth, carried a bottle of brandy, and was attended by a servant carrying a greatcoat and stick. He got off at every grip, and was put in an open place now and then to shoot. He had, I believe, only one shot; this he bore very good-naturedly, and said to me, "I know I made a d——d ridiculous figure, but I don't care a farthing for it."

*November 3.*—The whole party set out for Tunbridge, except myself. I took leave, and rode to Hastings.

*November 5.*—Read Lives of Haydn and Mozart by Bombet; exceedingly entertaining, particularly for the new sort of world which the writer discovers to those who are not musical. He tells

some extraordinary stories of the composers. For example, Gluck wrote in a meadow with a bottle of champagne on each side of him, Anfossi's brother surrounded with fowls and sausages! All the great composers appeared about the year 1730. 1820.

*November 6.*—Saw my old acquaintance, Mr. Wetherell. He told me some curious anecdotes—true or not, I cannot say.

*December 1.*—Dined at Kinnaird's this day. Duke of Leinster, Leicester, Stanhope, Robert Gordon, and Lumley there. L. Stanhope just come from India—had been twelve days at St. Helena; had not seen Napoleon.

Lowe will not allow Bertrand to act in any official capacity, and Napoleon will not let any one be introduced except through Bertrand. Stanhope lived in Lowe's house. He owned that Lowe might relax much of his severity without any danger of Napoleon's escape. He added that nothing would have prevented Napoleon from making complaints.

*December 7.*—Walked with Ellice, who showed me a letter he had had from Lord Grey, desiring Ellice to tell him whether or not it would be expected, if Grey was sent for by the King, he should pledge himself to Reform, and to what Reform; and whether Ellice thought a Ministry should refuse to come in and do all the good they could, merely because they could not carry Reform.



1820. This is a curious letter, but I think Lord Grey is an incautious man, or perhaps he really wants to know what Burdett, myself, and others, who he knows herd with Ellice, say on these subjects.

1821. *January 23.*—Went down to House of Commons. The Ministers made a most wretched figure. The speech from the throne was mere milk-and-water.

Went to Brooks's and dined upstairs. Lord Milton (Fitzwilliam) sat next to me at dinner. He owned to me that Reform was gaining ground in his mind. Indeed, I never saw so great a change as to Reform in my life. General discontent as to the conduct of our front bench—our leaders. The country has been expecting so much to see so little done.

*January 24.*—Many petitions presented for Reform of Parliament.

*January 26.*—House of Commons. Made a speech on presenting petitions in favour of Reform. Members continued presenting petitions till past eight o'clock. Many made excellent speeches.

The debate lasted till six in the morning. We divided 209, they 310. The Ministers had expected 70 only majority. William Peel voted with us, Robert Peel went away.

*February 4.*—Burdett and I dined with Mr. Speaker. I think, on the whole, it is the handsomest gala dinner in Europe. Mr. Speaker very pointedly civil to me. Burdett thought it



very handsome his asking him whilst under conviction, and said little shabby Abbott would not have done it. We had a Radical party, except Lord J. Russell, Sir R. Wilson, etc. The chaplain told me my colleague was the best speaker in Parliament. 1821.

*March 5.*—Went to the House—dined upstairs. Hurried down, hearing Grampound Disfranchisement Bill was on, which I found Lord J. Russell had given up, in disgust, to Stuart-Wortley. Baring was not in the House, but I made my answer to him, told of his parading into Taunton with a big loaf and four cupids before him. Was much cheered, and was told I had made a very good speech afterwards. I ended by saying that, although a Radical Reformer, I should support the Bill even in its present wretched form.

Voted with the minority for Dr. Lushington's motion to disqualify Ellice from being a Master in Chancery in Ireland and M.P. for Dublin. This is the strongest proof of the corruption of Parliament I ever saw. The House last session had voted this by a large majority. Grant and Castlereagh had brought in the Bill. Castlereagh had said that he must be a bold man who would oppose an Address to the Crown disqualifying Ellice. Ellice himself had sworn before a committee that the duties of the office required ten months' daily attendance. Yet we had only 52 against 101. Said he still stuck to the principle, and would vote for a Bill prospectively

1821. disqualifying. Peel took the strong line, saying justice before all things, no *ex post facto* laws. Plunket spoke admirably—we had all the reason, but not a vote was gained by truth or eloquence.

*March 11.*—Lord Forbes told me Lord Fife had been to the King and asked him which way he should vote about the Catholics. King said, “Which way you please.” Now, the last time the King told Lord Fife to vote against the Catholics. Lord Grenville told Lord Nugent he never was sanguine about carrying the question until now, and yet some people will bet ten to one it is not carried.

*March 15.*—The King of Spain has been playing his Ministers a trick, and speaking, like Hamlet’s players, more than was set down for him, at the opening of the Cortes. Ministers resigned. I hear from D. Baillie, from Madrid, that the King is at the bottom of the disturbance at his palace gates, of which he afterwards complained himself. The Cortes have found him out, and Baillie thinks that this treachery will one day or the other end in his abdication.

I had a letter from Byron, who tells me that Austrian troops will get *their gruel*. They marched from Ravenna ten days before they intended, on account of discovering a plan to rise and massacre them.

*March 16.*—Catholic question—second reading in the House this night. Canning came and spoke last. He had a hit at *demagogues* and Palace

Yard, which to me seemed very personal and was certainly very much out of place. I, like a fool, was very uncomfortable about it. He talked about such demagogues "finding their level and shrinking to their proper dimensions in six months." The House laughed and looked at me, but I do not think the thing was relished much beyond the moment. It was the last speech, at near three in the morning, and I voted with Canning, so I could not answer him, but this shall be added to the *odia in longum*. Lambton said to me afterwards that I had *risen* since I came into the House, so Canning's attack could not affect me. 1821.

*March 19.*—Grampound Disfranchisement Bill passed.

*March 26.*—Catholic M.P.'s admitted to sit in Parliament by majority of 223 to 211, adjourned after repealing the *Irish Witchcraft Bill*!

*March 31.*—Byron's letter about Bowles and the Pope controversy published. It is very good, I think.

*April 2.*—Dined with Edward Ellice. Met there a Scotch party, and amongst them, Jeffrey the Great, for the first time—a little black-eyed, smart, ill-tempered mannered man—not attentive to any; cut D. Kinnaird, who was there. J. W. Ward there—better company a good deal. Mrs. Jeffrey, an American lady, dark, with St. Vitus dance in her nose and chin.

Went away at ten to third reading of Catholic



1821. Bill. House divided, and at exactly twenty-three minutes to four in the morning the Speaker passed the Bill. The division in this reading was 216 to 197. Going out, Mackintosh said to me that some one had said to him that the Lords would throw out the Bill, on which Mackintosh had observed, there was no instance of their throwing out so important a measure when passed by the Commons. The other said, *The Exclusion Bill*. "No," said Mackintosh, "that was passed at the Revolution."

*April 3.*—Naples certainly taken, and without a struggle. Soldiers, 120,000, dispersed without a shot. A Count Santorre Santa Rosa<sup>1</sup> trying to keep the Revolutionists together in Piedmont.

At the House of Commons. Voted for the second reading of the Malt Tax Repeal Bill. We were shamefully beaten—242 to 144. Castle-reagh declaring he would resign if beaten, some of our friends, Grenfell, Baring, etc., voted against us, and yet Western had really the folly to imagine the division would be a near thing. Lord Fife declared this night that he had been told on authority that he had been turned away solely for voting for the repeal. I asked him if he had any objection to repeat that fact

<sup>1</sup> A Sardinian patriot, born in 1783. One of the leaders of the popular insurrection in 1821, and became Minister of War on the abdication of Victor Emmanuel; but was deserted by his own friends and persecuted by the Austrians. He went to Greece, took part in the War of Independence, and died in 1825.



on his legs. He begged me not to do it, so I did not. 1821.

*April 4.*—Dined this day at the great Reform dinner at the City of London. Almost all the Whig Reformers there. The *despised rump* managed the whole. Gardner, our secretary, delivered the toasts to the Lord Mayor. What a change since last year, when scarcely a Whig would speak to Burdett or me! And yet no compromise has, I am sure, been made on our part.

*April 14.*—Showed Kinnaird something I intended for George Canning on Tuesday. He approved. The case was this: Canning insulted me the first night I spoke in Parliament last year. He insulted me equally wantonly on the Catholic question a month ago. No possibility of reply was given to me on either occasion. Besides this, he is always attacking the people, and besides this, if Westminster men send me to Parliament in an extraordinary and most generous way, I must do something to show myself a little above par in courage at least, I mean moral courage; so I got up a portrait of a political adventurer as a contrast to the demagogue whom Canning is so fond of letting fly at, and I connected it with Parliamentary Reform by showing how much such a being is caressed in Parliament.

*April 15.*—Called on Burdett and consulted him as to the projected attack on the adventurer.

1821. He said he would think of it. I told him I was prepared for all events. My great aim was so to contrive it as not to be stopped by the Speaker, but yet to be as strong and as pointed as possible.

*April 16.*—Dined with Burdett; we both agreed that the thing was to be done, and would do well. I was aware that it was hit or miss—would fail or succeed completely.

Returned to the House of Commons, where a battle-royal took place between Brougham and W. Pole (Long Pole Wellesley); very harsh words—"base, foul, false," used by the Irishman, and not much retracted. Hume accused Government of inciting and employing Franklin.

Palmerston said we were only in the "first year of peace." My tablets, as Hamlet says, my tablets remark that—no vote.

Forgot to note that Castlereagh's father's death has made him Lord Londonderry.

*April 17.*—Many efforts made to induce Lambton to postpone his motion owing to adjourned debate in the Lords, Castlereagh and Burdett's absence. We all urged, but Lambton would not consent. The Whigs sent me to him, because they said he would do it for me, but he would not.

I got my materials just ready by four o'clock, and went in carriage during a storm to the House. . . . Lambton spoke an hour, and well, but detailed his plan too much, and spoke too much on foreign politics. Whitbread's seconding was not

very good. When Wilmot sat down several rose, but the Speaker called on me. I noticed some sophistries of Wilmot's, and went on very glibly for some time without notes, then came to my notes. House very silent and well-behaved the greater part of the time, Canning particularly civil, crying, "Hear, hear," nodding and smiling when I made a point, so much so that I found myself beginning to waver in my resolution, but then the necessity of the case and the folly of letting a civil word or look put me aside from my just purpose overcame my scruples. I first attacked his pamphlet—the Liverpool speech—which I took out and called the *vade mecum*, the manual of corruption. At last I came to the portrait. The House took it at once—a dead silence prevailed. Martin at last could stand it no longer; he lifted up his hands and eyes and cried, "Hear hear!" when I came to "froth and foam." I stopped and smiled, but went on instantly—the House all attention, every eye turned on Canning, who, I was told, turned all colours, pulled his hat over his eyes, and, in short, *totoque accepit pectore vulnus*. I only missed one short sentence, and got through the whole with the utmost coolness and precision.

I sat down unexpectedly, so that the cheers were but faint; but I had not been down a minute before people told me that the thing was complete. Baring said to me, "Now I see what you can do, I feel how much obliged I

1821.



1821. should be to you for letting me off so easily with the cupids." Lord Nugent told me, "Either you or Canning will this night have had the d—— dressing ever a man received in Parliament." . . . Martin got up and compared me to Danton, who wished to put down the aristocracy of talent. . . . Speaker after speaker, but Canning not up. Ellice told me his friends advise not to fit the cap, but that he is determined, so all told me to prepare.

I came downstairs. Lord Tavistock joined me and told me how delighted he was, and how right I was. Walked with Kinnaird, who told me that the effect was very great. Lord Dacre, who was sitting next to him, thought me quite right. William Smith came up to me and said, "Well, if you are nothing else, I must say you are the boldest man in Parliament."

I went to Brooks's. All the world there pleased. Lambton said nothing could be better—asked me if I did not tremble for to-morrow. No, I said, I defied him.

*April 18.*—Rode to the House. Canning did not come down until half-past seven. Had a great book under his arm. At last got up and said that as the mover and seconder were absent, as well as those who had taken a share in the discussion, he should not stop the division. A fine come off, I think.

I came in just after the division, and sat down opposite Canning. He soon walked off. So this



is the end of his coming from Paris to oppose Reform, and this is the end of Lambton's motion. 1821.

*April 19.*—No message from Canning. Went to Brooks's. *Times* observes to-day that "Canning would not take up the gauntlet which a chivalrous opponent had thrown down." Went to the House. Tennyson spoke to me about Canning. Said I was remarkable for civil language in that House, and had done right to stop Mr. Canning.<sup>1</sup>

BOOK.—On my first entrance into Parliament I was honoured by Mr. Canning's very pointed, but not very polite, notice. I could not, without being personal, repel the attack at the moment, but I resolved to bide my time; and when Mr. Lambton brought forward his motion on Reform on April 17, 1821, I concluded a speech of some length with a character which Mr. Canning could scarcely help seeing applied to him, and which was recognised by the whole House. I scarcely need say that it was carefully prepared and got by heart.

During the delivery of this part of my speech a profound silence prevailed, and all eyes were fixed on the original of the portrait, who appeared once or twice about to interrupt me, but was kept down by Mr. Huskisson. That gentleman, I was given to understand, prevented Mr. Canning

<sup>1</sup> Lord Broughton's account of this episode in the "Long Life" is much shortened from the Diary.

1821. from speaking during the remainder of the evening. The debate was adjourned until the next day, when Mr. Canning took his seat with several books beside him, and was expected to make a vigorous reply to the Reformers, not forgetting myself and my portrait. It would not have been very easy to make a satisfactory comment on my nameless picture, but it would have been very easy to be insolent. For that I was prepared. Nothing happened. Mr. Lambton was dining with Michael Angelo Taylor, and was not present in the early part of the evening. Mr. Canning would not speak during his absence, and an unexpected division took place in a very thin House, the numbers being, for the motion 43, against 55. Mr. Lambton came into the House immediately afterwards, and was received by a laugh and cheer. A facetious adversary made a song on "Michael's Claret." So ended this, to me, important affair.

During the six remaining years of Mr. Canning's life he never repeated his first incivilities. Quite the contrary; for, on more than one occasion, he was pointedly commendatory, and when I invented the phrase, "His Majesty's Opposition," paid me a compliment upon the fortunate hit. I did not, however, cross the House with Mr. Brougham, Sir Francis Burdett, and the majority of the party when Mr. Canning became Prime Minister; but, after a discussion on the subject with Lord Althorp and Lord Tavistock, at my

own rooms, resolved to retain with them my seat on the Opposition benches, until we knew what Mr. Canning would do in regard to Parliamentary Reform. 1821.

DIARY. *April 19.*—Byron's "Doge of Venice" and "Prophecy of Dante" published.

*April 23.*—Dined at the Mansion House. A very pretty sight, the women and festoons of flowers giving a foreign air to everything. I sat next but one to Mackintosh, who amused me with stories. An immense crowd came to the ball—some four thousand.

*April 25.*—Dined with Burdett. Chantrey, the sculptor, and Cline, the surgeon, there. The latter very silent, but told us he had often seen Garrick. Garrick's voice was wonderfully clear; sounded loud off the stage, but natural on the stage.

Chantrey, Kinnaird, and I went to Drury Lane Theatre, where they had acted *Marino Faliero* in defiance of an injunction procured this morning from the Lord Chancellor by Murray, who dispersed handbills to that effect in the House. The play succeeded, some say, but *The Times* called it a poor reception.

*June 9.*—Heard from Byron. He compliments me upon my philippic on Canning.

## CHAPTER XIII

1821. *June 27.*—I find politics a most engrossing pursuit, and the more I see of them the more I am convinced that men of ordinary capacities are best qualified for them. A great eagerness to excel creates a fastidiousness which is fatal to excellence, and, generally speaking, the study of passing events irritates too much to improve the intellectual faculty.

*July 4.*—I went to Brooks's, and there read the news in the evening papers. Yes, Buonaparte is dead; he died on May 5 of a cancer in the stomach, after an illness of forty days, the last fortnight of which he was aware of his approaching end. It is said he was sensible to within five or six hours of his death; gave orders that he should be opened; said that his son might benefit from knowing the disease of which he died, as it was hereditary, his father having died of the same. Left in his will that he wished to be buried under some willows near a spring of water, which he used to drink of during his rides.

Sir James Mackintosh said to me, "What a sensation this would have made nine years ago, and what a sensation will it make nine hundred



years hence." He went on to say he thought 1821.  
Napoleon the best of the great conquerors. We all joined in abusing Sir Hudson Lowe. Creevey told me that the Duke of Wellington told him at Brussels in 1818 that it was wrong to use any unnecessary restraint over Napoleon; that two hundred men would keep him in the island; that Lowe was a d——d stupid fellow; that Lowe had tried to teach him (the Duke) how the British army ought to be accoutred, and referred to the Prussians; that he told Lowe that he commanded British and not Prussians; that Lowe, being Quartermaster-General, returned to the charge more than once, and that, accordingly, the Duke wrote to Government and had him sent home.

There was a horn or two blowing about the streets, but so little was the sensation that my father met me at home and never mentioned that he had heard the news.

John Warrender has since told me that the rumour had reached France and created no sensation there.

*July 6.*—My father saw Mr. Wilkins at the Royal Society Club yesterday, who had seen a man just come from St. Helena.

Napoleon was buried where he desired. He was laid in state in his green-and-red uniform with all his orders on, and every one admitted to see him; his countenance was particularly placid. There is a rumour he died a good Christian.

1821. He gave Captain Poppleton a snuff-box just before he died, saying, "Adieu, mon ami, voilà la seule bagatelle qui me reste. Je vous la présente afin que vous puissiez faire voir le don de ma reconnoissance après ma mort."

I saw at Moulsey on the race-ground a sorrel horse which had carried Napoleon on one of his campaigns. It had got into our King's stable, then it became Douglas's property, who gave it to his brother-in-law, Sir B. Bloomfield. I really did not like to look at the horse.

The news of his death was announced at the India House whilst a court was sitting. Mr. Lowndes said, "Then, Mr. Chairman, I congratulate you and the company." There was loud disapprobation of this sentiment, and D. Kinnaird, much to his horror, said it was unmanly and ungenerous to rejoice at the natural death of one who had long been politically dead. Lowndes explained that he was glad the expense of the St. Helena establishment would cease. . . . Horror.

I am glad to hear that the Duke of Wellington the other night at Almack's talked with great admiration of Napoleon.

*July 13.*—Called on Bickersteth. He told me he had heard nothing but panegyric of me, and said everything had turned out lucky for me. Luck is nothing but prudence and spirit, though one is almost afraid to say so after the signal reverses of some men.

*August 5.*—Dined with Kinnaird. A Mr. Play-

fair there. He landed at St. Helena five days after Napoleon's burial. He told us that General Bertrand had dined with Sir Hudson Lowe and made up all matters, owning that Napoleon was not to be satisfied with anything, and that Lowe had done his duty. Bertrand said that Napoleon was Emperor to the last; neither he nor Madame Bertrand spoke to him when dying without being first spoken to. His last words were, "My son." Bertrand advanced. "Your son." "Yes, give my son my sword, and tell him that I leave him to the protection and the generosity of the French army."

This sword, I understand, was the sword which was given to Napoleon for a prize when at the military college. It had an inscription upon it.

Napoleon was buried with another sword by his side, in full regimentals, in three coffins, ready for removal if necessary.

Napoleon in his own will expressed a wish to be removed to France and buried between two French generals, Duroc and another, but if the Government would not let him be removed, then he wished to be buried in the valley where he now lies. He expressed also a wish to have no other inscription than "Napoleon" on a simple slab, and if that was not permitted, he wished to have nothing put.

He left Bertrand's son (they say) to the amount of £12,000 a year; also left his valet £500 a year, and requested Bertrand and Montholon would

1821.



1821. treat him as their equal. The next day after his death the two were seen arm-in-arm, walking with the valet through the principal street of the town. It is said that a regular correspondence with France was found in his papers. Also that his Life up to 1814 had been found, but that none of the papers published as his were authentic.

This Mr. Playfair seemed an intelligent man, and what he said was doubtless a faithful report of what he had heard.

He told us how Joseph Hume had made his fortune in seven years in India by contracting to supply the army with corn, and by paying in bad rupees, but all quite honourably.

September 15.—Murray has offered 1,000 guineas for the three last cantos of "Don Juan," and 1,000 guineas for "Sardanapalus" and the two "Foscari." Byron does not think this enough. Payne and Foss do.

I called with D. Kinnaird on Count Bertrand, at Brunet's Hotel. Found him and his Countess, his brother, and another person there. The Countess ill with a cough—a pale, tall, thin, agreeable-looking woman, of a certain age. The Count very solicitous about her health.

Bertrand drew near to me and spoke frankly about my book. Said the Emperor saw at once that *il sortait de la classe*; that he saw I had had recourse to good informants. That he, at first, had resolved to answer the book and to



correct many points of which he alone has knowledge, having the reins of Government, and could give a just account; that he observed I had altered my opinions as to the *libéraux* in the second edition, and had seen that they did wrong to suspect the Emperor and to debate about liberty when they should be defending their country against the foreigners. This alluded to a note which Constant furnished me with. 1821.

Bertrand told me that the reason why Napoleon discontinued writing his remarks on my book was, first, he took up the employment, and *wrote those things which all the world knows*. I did not ask him what he really wrote, but Montholon told Kinnaird that he wrote the account of the battle of Waterloo, which Phillips published. The other reason was that he could not write on my book without exposing the treachery of many men still about the French Court, which he did not wish to do. I said, "Fouché, for instance." "Yes," said Bertrand, "I myself introduced by the back stairs to Napoleon the courier who had Fouché's dispatches to the enemy—eight days before the battle of Waterloo. Napoleon could have cut off his head in two hours by a military commission." "Yes," said I, "or by the common form of justice." "Oh," replied Bertrand, "that is a bad way in France; it sets all Paris talking and rouses every angry passion before the thing can be done." I asked him why Napoleon did not do what he might

1821. with Fouché. "He was not strong enough," said Bertrand.

I asked him if it was true that he had shaken hands with Sir Hudson Lowe. He answered, "Que voulez-vous? all was over, the Emperor was dead." I said, "He says you were satisfied with his conduct." "Oh," replied he, "he always said so." I asked him if he had seen Lowe since his return to England. "J'en ai assez vu," was his answer.

I then told him the story of Lowe's letter about my book. Bertrand said, "It was meant for vexation, nothing else." He added that the greatest comfort the Emperor and his friends had was the receipt of books from Europe. "C'était une fête pour nous; when your book reached us, we did nothing but read and talk about it for eight days. Lady Holland's kindness in sending books I shall never forget as long as I live, and Lord Holland was the only man in either House of Parliament who dared say a word for the Emperor."

Whilst we were talking came in the Marquis de Montchenu, who had been French Commissioner at St. Helena to watch Napoleon. He was just arrived—a curious old fellow in uniform, with a huge cocked hat and white cockade. He seemed delighted to see the Bertrands, and told all the petty events which had taken place at St. Helena since their departure. This was truly French.

Bertrand is a small, plain-looking man with lively eyes, but a mild expression and mild manner, not so French as most Frenchmen. He told me he wished much to go to France, but had not yet gained permission. The whole of his conversation was highly interesting to me, and fully corresponded to the character I have heard of him. 1821.

*October 15.*—Rode with Sir Francis to Easton Gray. Ricardo dined with us. We had a violent argument. He would contend that to raise one man degraded others. This is a dogma of Mill's.

*October 17.*—Tracy and his son, and a Mr. Chauncey Hare Townshend,<sup>1</sup> a young poet of pretty red-and-white face and pleasing manners, at Ramsbury. We laughed at him at first, but found him very agreeable. He is a friend of Southey's. He told me he had heard Southey say he could not conceive why Lord Byron had attacked him. He heard Southey express great admiration at Byron's genius. Townshend's poems are childish, and not equal to his talents. He sings and *cuts out all his friends*, as Lord Erskine said.

*October 19.*—Dined at Littlecote (Mr. Popham). We met a Captain Dundas there—a very agreeable man indeed. He commanded the *Tagus* frigate in the Mediterranean, and in the Archipelago. Carried up Surgeon Liston to Constantinople;

<sup>1</sup> 1798–1868. Won Chancellor's Prize at Cambridge for poem on Jerusalem; afterwards took Orders.



1821. but the Turks would not allow his frigate to pass the Dardanelles, although he offered to land all his guns. He gave us a curious account of General Maitland, whom he called King Tom, and whom he had on board his ship. He told us that the Ionians say they have had enough to ruin any nation—five years' plague, two years' blockade, and three years of Tom Maitland.

*October 22.*—Went out shooting; found Lord Erskine here on my return. No embarrassment on either side. No recollection of the “trifling mistake.”

This extraordinary person, now past seventy years of age, had all the manners and a good deal of the appearance of a young man of thirty. A certain vehemence in his mode of speaking gave an appearance of sincerity to all he said; and this conviction was not a little aided by his assertions and oaths, which were sufficiently frequent and strong. I wish to put down what I recollect of his conversation.

He said he came down in the York House Bath coach to Hungerford, with Sir George Keith and a Methodist parson, who were going to establish an evangelistic floating chapel. He said that observing that it was d—— cold, the parson checked him for swearing, and they had a controversy on regeneration, which ended amicably. The parson's name was Smith. Lord Erskine said he was a very clever and agreeable man. He told Lord Erskine that Methodism was gaining



ground in the army and navy, particularly in the Life Guards. 1821.

Lord Erskine then told us what I have heard him mention before, namely, how it was that Lady Huntingdon spread her chapels over the country, in consequence of the rector of the parish prosecuting her chaplain for preaching. Erskine advised her to take out a licence, and the example spread like wildfire.

Lord Erskine gave us an account of his being employed to draw up part of the Criminal Code for the French at the early period of the Revolution. Target,<sup>1</sup> who afterwards defended the King, called upon him and proposed to him to do so. He said that such a thing on his part would be liable to misunderstanding, and he must first positively know whether it was the object of the National Assembly to preserve the monarchy. Target assured him most solemnly it was, and then Erskine agreed to meet the Lameths, Barnave, and others on the subject. These persons gave him the solemn assurances which he had heard from Target that the King and the Crown were not to be meddled with. He then assisted them as they wished, and drew up that part of the code relative to trial by jury which now stands in the "Code Civil." On the day the report from the Committee was read he was

<sup>1</sup> Gui Jean Baptiste Target (1733-1806) was one of the most distinguished advocates of his time, and took an active but not a leading part in politics during the Revolution. He was chosen by Louis XVI. as one of his council, but declined the office.

1821. introduced to the National Assembly. He was seated, the President rang a bell, the whole Assembly rose. The President thanked him in the name of the nation. Erskine bowed several times and then retired.

He repeatedly told me that he would leave a record of these facts, and show how sincere the constituents were in their wish to establish a limited monarchy, and how true it was that Louis XVI. was murdered by the measures adopted in England. He told us that when he was in France, after the peace of Amiens, he went to Court in a coat belonging to the Prince of Wales, as his Chancellor, which the Prince had given him out of his own wardrobe and he had had altered to fit himself, "though," said he to me, "it wanted very little altering over the chest."

"That stupid ass, Merry," said he, "introduced me to Napoleon as the Chancellor of the Prince of Wales. He seemed to know nothing of me, asking me if I had much to do; but when I came afterwards to dine at the Tuileries, I was shown into Josephine's room, and she rose and curtsied to me. I thought her curtsy was for some one else, and drew back. She curtsied again, and then told me that the First Consul had desired her to invite me to her evening party after the Court dinner, which would be but short. Accordingly," continued Erskine, "I went to the party. The First Consul soon came up to me, and com-

plained of Merry for having been so stupid as to introduce me by the title of Chancellor of the Prince, and not to know, added Napoleon, 'that Mr. Erskine's name was much better known than his office.' " 1821.

Napoleon then spoke to me of trial by jury, and said that the English had been fitted for it by the habit of ages, but that in France it would not be understood and appreciated, and would only be an engine of Government. I replied that I could not presume to say anything about the present condition of the French nation, but that I trusted that a conqueror and a governor who had given such proofs of his talents and love of his country would do all in his power to qualify his nation, as soon as possible, for the enjoyment of that inestimable blessing, and that I doubted not he would do so. I looked to see how he would take the hint. At first the upper and under part of his face seemed as if they belonged to two different people, one mild, the other savage; but he soon seemed all smiles, and continued speaking as if much pleased with me.

He made Lebrun, the Second Consul, interpret my English into French for him.

This was the same night that Fox had the conversation with him about the slave trade. He asked me if I had been in the army. I said, Yes, and he appointed me to go to Duroc's the next morning and see a review of his Guard in the



1821. Carrousel. I went, and saw a private room of Napoleon's, in which he had the heart of some general in a bottle, a friend of his killed in battle.

During the review I had my hand for a long time on the neck of the white horse on which he was mounted; it was the white horse which he rode at the battle of Marengo.

I found Barrère, who had figured so in the Revolution, employed in editing a paper for the Government, as low and blackguard as *John Bull*.

Lord Erskine told us also that he had seen a great deal of Tallien and his wife. The latter had given him an animated detail of her share in the downfall of Robespierre, and had promised to put it to paper for Erskine. He went to a stag-hunt at her country-house. They hunted the stag in the morning, and then dined, shutting up the stag with a purpose of hunting him after dinner. Erskine told Madame Tallien that it was impossible she should take pleasure in such cruel sport, and offered, if she would consent, to let the stag out. She consented, and Erskine did so.

We had a deal of talk about the present King. Erskine attacked the Whigs violently for their personal conduct towards the King, and said that they were angry with him for not joining in that conduct. He said the King was his private friend, and he would not, but that at the same time his friendship had never operated upon his public conduct. The King when Prince had repeatedly told him that he never expected him



to vote or speak in Parliament in any other way than his conscience dictated. He told him so particularly at the Pavilion the year that Queen Charlotte was there. Lady Hertford, however, one day at dinner asked Erskine how he, who was a friend to the Regent, would refrain from supporting the Administration. Erskine said that the Regent did not wish it, and told her to ask the Regent herself. 1821.

Erskine now, however, seemed to think his old friend not quite so Liberal. He told us that Lord Anglesey had told him that his conduct as to the Queen's trial was extraordinary, that it had done the King the greatest harm, and that if he had not taken the side he did the Queen would not have had a lawyer for her. Lord Hutchinson in the early stage of the business had told him the King intended to send for him. "If he had," said Erskine, "and had suffered me to talk without breaking in, which he always inclined to do even when most good-natured, I would have told him what I thought."

Lord Erskine told me that he had gone to the coronation at Mr. Coote's particular desire, and only as a peer. That when he afterwards went to the levée, the King treated him as if he wished to get out of his way, and when he kissed his hand said not a word. "By God," said Erskine, "he shall make the next overtures. I did not go to the drawing-room, I would have seen him at the end of the world first."

1821. At the same time that he told this of our King he allowed all his early merits and friendship for him, and never omitted an opportunity of justifying the King for excluding the Whigs. The Regent was sincere in his wish to bring in the Whigs—he knew it; but Grey and Grenville were impracticable. They absolutely went the length of writing a round-robin to the Regent refusing all compromise. “I refused to sign it. Then Lord Moira was to try to make an administration with Lord Hardwicke, and if he could, get me with him. He came to me. I told him, no. I would not insult the Regent, but I would not quit my party.” I said, “I wish you had, though.” Lord Erskine said it had been good for the nation if he had; it would have kept Perceval out, and we should have been soon strong enough. The love of power would soon have brought over some old friends. The Regent told Erskine afterwards that he would sooner sweep the streets than admit those men who had insulted him in every way.

All this Erskine asserted most solemnly with phrases such as, “If this were the last word I had to speak,” etc., but he seemed to me to confound time and dates a little, or perhaps passed so rapidly that I could not follow him.

He told us that when he took his retainer from Tom Paine he was Attorney-General to the Prince. The Prince came to him under the gallery of the House of Commons, and said

the King would not be pleased with his Attorney-General keeping Paine's retainer. He told the Prince that the way was to put the case to some distinguished men of the profession. The Prince did not seem to think this would satisfy the King. It ended in Erskine being deprived of the office under the Prince and keeping his retainer. He kept entirely aloof from the Prince, who at last fell ill. A common friend then came to him and said the Prince wished to see him. "Is it a direct and expressed message?" said Erskine. "It is," replied the other. "In that case I shall go." Erskine went—he found the Prince ill in a small wretched bed upstairs. The Prince told him he knew nothing about the etiquette of the law, but he was certain that he, Erskine, had been right in conscience about the retainer. He then told him that the Chancellorship of the Duchy was vacant, and he would not fill it up but with him. He ordered him to go to the proper office and bring the patent with him in his pocket to dinner. Erskine did so. He came to dinner with the patent, and was appointed accordingly.

Erskine said that he had no particular ties except the Prince; that it was the Prince who introduced him to Mr. Fox; that Lord Keppel, whose counsel he was, had introduced him to the Prince.

He said that the late King had been a most mischievous one. He went on: "When our

1821.



1821. party came in the first wise thing we did, two weeks—nay, two days after coming in, was to lay before the King the paper which Sir John Douglas had given the Duke of Sussex relative to the Princess of Wales. The King asked Lord Grenville what he had better do. Lord Grenville said he had better send for the Chancellor (Erskine). Accordingly a copy of the paper was sent to me with an order to attend the King next morning. I had previously refused to read the paper, saying I was a lawyer and might sit in judgment on the case; but, on the King's commands, I took it in my chaise going down to Windsor.

When with the King, His Majesty made me sit down and read the paper to him, saying, "If I put a question to you, you will not object?" Accordingly he did put two questions, and if he had lived all his life in the Court of the King's Bench he could not have put two questions more to the purpose.

A day or two before I went out of office, as I was with the King, he said to me, "Do you recollect my two questions which I put when you read such a paper to me?" I told him I did. "Be assured then," says he, "that no man living knows what either you or I said on that occasion. I have never told even one of my own children." This was honourable.

Lord Erskine mentioned that soon after he had the seals, the King talked to him of giving



patents of precedents, and said he thought it 1821.  
 foolish for the Crown to give lawyers advantages  
 to enable them to plead against itself. The King  
 talked of his retaining fee from Paine, and said,  
 "Your situation has brought you in contact with  
 some of the very worst men that ever lived in  
 this country." Erskine replied, "And allow me  
 to say that your Majesty's situation has also  
 brought you in contact with some of the worst  
 men in the country." The King laughed and  
 enjoyed this character of the Ministers whose  
 heads he had been knocking one against the  
 other.

The day that Erskine went to give up the seals  
 he asked the King to give his purse-bearer a place  
 which he named. The King said he was a very  
 good man and would do it. He did it on the  
 spot, and Erskine, who was desired by the King  
 to keep the seals a week longer, carried away  
 the order in his purse. The pretext was the  
 hearing of some causes, but Erskine said he had  
 no doubt it was some d—— job.

We talked of Hardy's trial. Erskine abused  
 Chief-Justice Eyre. Eyre insinuated that Erskine  
 had party motives for his defence. Erskine turned  
 his back on Eyre, and told Buller the cause.  
 Eyre apologised, but repeated his offence. Thurlow  
 told Erskine that if Eyre got a conviction he was  
 to be made a peer.

He told me that he first went into a court at  
 Maidstone when in the army, and hung up his

1821. little light infantry cap near Mansfield's square cap. Mansfield was then on the bench, and said to him, "Your mother tells me you are to be one of us." He then proceeded to name the most eminent counsel to him. "In four years and a half," added Lord Erskine, "I had a silk gown and was leading all those very people."

Erskine told me that he was the author of an attack on Best that appeared in *The Morning Chronicle*. He complained of the judges, and said they were worse than at any time.

He said that Burdett was quite right in his politics. He was for having a real King and a real Parliament; not a puppet moved by a faction, and a corrupt House of Commons. He professed himself as much a Reformer as ever, and said that Lord Grey would go as far as ever. I doubted.

He mentioned that the King, when in Ireland, had been asked by Sidmouth if he did not wonder to see a people so good, and loyal, and generous, who had formerly been so rebellious and blood-thirsty. "No, not at all," said the King; "their former character must have been caused by misrule." Sidmouth told this to Erskine's informant.

Erskine seems to think the King is not decidedly an enemy to Reform of Parliament, but is ignorant of the subject. "Were I he," added Lord Erskine, "I would recommend it from the throne."

I have omitted many striking things told me by Erskine. His manner is somewhat wild. He came into the library once, and as he opened the door burst out, "It is a pity Grenville ever joined us." He repeatedly said that the great thing for public men to do was to make the Ministers odious, and spare the King. He gave the reason given by Burdett: "You must have a King, so treat him decently; if you could have another Government by a word then the case would be different." He often expressed an opinion that the Whigs were down and would never come in. 1821.

This wonderful old man danced at Burdett's tenants' ball the same evening, and sat up till two in the morning. He wore his ribbon and star.

I have forgotten that Erskine talked very strongly about the effort of the Greeks. He mentioned that the Duke of York had said to him that if Alexander marched against the Turks he would have all the kings against him. Erskine said, "He will have the King of Kings for him." He said he would march to Constantinople, kick the Turks out, and tell them to go about their business, and stop at any place they could find short of hell!

He talked much of Count Orloff, now at Brighton, and of his talents. Orloff tells him the Emperor Alexander has 1,300,000 soldiers in arms.

*October 24.*—Erskine left us.

## CHAPTER XIV

1821. [ DIARY. *October* 28.—Return to Murray, the publisher, the proofs of “Cain,” a poem by Lord Byron. Burdett and I read this poem. I think it has scarce one specimen of real poetry or even musical numbers in it. He says in a letter to Kinnaird that it is written in his purest metaphysical manner. Some will call it blasphemous, and I think the whole world will finally agree in thinking it unworthy. Yet I hear T. Moore says it is the best thing Byron ever wrote.

*November* 3.—Burdett and myself took leave of Ramsbury.

*November* 4.—Arrived at Kirby Park, near Melton, in Leicestershire.

*November* 5.—The Quorn, Melton, or Osbaldeston’s Hounds met at Kirby Gate. . . . I rode a chestnut, and was well in with the hounds, not without apprehensions at this my début in the great Leicestershire world, but found it, like everything else, not so formidable as made by report.

*November* 6.—Wrote a long letter to Byron, in which I gave him my opinion of “Cain.” . . . I should not wonder if, by performing my duty towards my friend, I should draw down anger.



*N'importe*; there is risk in anything that is right, 1821.  
either public or private, for "when a man," as Joseph Surface says, etc., etc.

*November 12.*—Stayed home and read Shakespeare—divine, indeed.

*November 17.*—I lately wrote a letter to Lord Byron remonstrating in the strongest terms against his publishing "Cain," which appears to me a complete failure.

*November 18.*—Read a little Tacitus sometimes, and Shakespeare, and a thing called "Histoire du Parlement anglais," by Louis Buonaparte, with short notes by Napoleon Buonaparte. It is curious, inasmuch as it shows the despotic principles of the latter, but is totally devoid of merit, and abounding with ridiculous blunders, *e.g.* he imputes the events of the reign of Henry VI. to Henry V.

*November 19.*—Osbaldeston out. He dined with Burdett afterwards, and told his story respecting the attempt to get him out of the country. He mentioned that Sir J. Musgrave, who broke his leg by jumping on him, visited him for the first day or two after the accident, but then sent him a note saying life was too short to lose a day, and he could not come. I find as much *tracasserie* and intrigue about fox-hunting as any other pursuit.

*December 7.*—Took leave of Burdett and then left Kirby.

*December 8.*—Rode from Kettering to Southill.

1821. W. Whitbread not at home, but Sam Whitbread had heard, as he said, of my passing through Bedford, and came after me.

*December 9.*—Letter from Byron, by which I find he is not at all pleased with what I have written to him about “Cain.”

*December 13.*—Found the new Ministerial appointments in the paper. Wellesley to go to Ireland. Goulburn, his Secretary. Wilmot to have Goulburn’s place. . . . Peel is certainly to have Sidmouth’s place, and the Grenvilles are coming in.

*December 18.*—Left Southill. Went afterwards to Oakley. This place I had not seen since 1814. Politics have lately kept Lord Tavistock and myself more asunder than in former days, but nothing could be kinder than his reception of me now. Lady Tavistock was also most friendly and agreeable.

*December 21.*—The Grenvilles come in. Lord Buckingham to be made a Duke; C. W. Wynne, President of the Board of Control; Fremantle, a Lord of Admiralty; and Phillimore something, I believe. G. Canning stays out. I believe he has certainly refused India.

*December 22.*—Old Lord Lynedoch came yesterday to Oakley. He is a surprising man as to personal strength and vigour. He rides as hard as the young ones—makes nothing of travelling by night, and, in short, at past seventy has little of old age about him. Tavistock tells me he is

a most liberal man, though poor. He did not like to take the pension when made a peer. 1821.

He is not very intellectual. I recollect nothing of his sayings except that Mounier told him at Paris that the correspondence *inédite et officielle* of Buonaparte was authentic—was collected by Napoleon Buonaparte himself, and was one of the first things he inquired after on his return from Elba.

*December 23.*—Passed evening at Oakley, and concluded a most agreeable visit at the house of a man who, bating inequality of condition, is, I think, a friendly person with me and wishes me well.

*December 24.*—Rode briskly to Southill.

*December 26.*—D. Kinnaird with us. I like this friend of mine better daily. I think I know his faults, and I do not expect to find out more.

*December 27.*—Chantrey and I had a long talk on sculpture. Chantrey spoke in favour of the reposing figure, and of the single figure. He seemed to think figures in action and groups did not tell their story. . . . He was very agreeable and instructive. I do not know that I quite agreed with him, but I hope I differed from him in the manner that a man such as I ought to speak to a man such as he is, when discoursing on his own art.

*December 28.*—At dinner Tom Atkin was the true *laudator temporis acti*. He spoke of the days he had seen at Southill when Hare and Fitzpatrick,



1821. Fox, and Lord J. Townshend and Sheridan composed the party. The others used to set upon Fox, who, he said, was sometimes sulky and waited some time before he put out his paw and crushed them.

1822. *January 1.*—Took leave of the good Whitbread and rode to London. Called in the evening on D. Baillie, who has not been long returned from nearly a nine years' tour. He was not at home.

*January 2.*—Dined at D. Kinnaird's. Poodle Byng with us. Baillie came in during the evening. I think my old friend had a little reserve about him, and he gave a sharp answer or two to Byng, who good-naturedly asked him where he came from last. "From Calais," said Baillie. He says he begins to find some of the warnings of age—deafness, blindness, and weakness of teeth. I can match him in the first. This is rather premature at thirty-five years of age.

*January 3.*—Chantrey does not think much of my bust of Lord Byron by Thorwaldsen, nor does he think a great deal of Thorwaldsen.

*January 4.*—I called on Chantrey. He told me some characteristic traits of Tooke and Burdett, which had passed under his own notice. . . . Burdett's mind is not framed so as to feel the impropriety of trifling inattentions, and it is possible that the very absence of some virtues is, in human composition, necessary for the formation of some other and greater qualities.



THE HONBLE. DOUGLAS KINNAIRD

FROM A PORTRAIT IN THE POSSESSION OF  
THE LORD KINNAIRD





Chantrey said that in conversation Tooke's great art was saying strong things without shocking people's feelings, although he was sometimes very violent and abusive and swore violently. 1822

Chantrey told me that Tooke was very anxious to get him patrons from the Tories. "You can do nothing or little," said Tooke, "to help us. Your purpose should be to make your fortune and live comfortably and reputably."

A favourite maxim of Tooke's was not to omit doing a small kindness on account of any man's insignificance. The odds are that every individual may have it in his power to hurt or help you once in seven years. Chantrey told me that he found Tooke's character gaining ground with the men on the ruling side. Of these Chantrey sees a great deal.

Chantrey's bust of the King is finished. It is a fine thing, but the wig is a wig, as I told him. "D—— that wig," said Chantrey, "he had it upstairs."

He mentioned to me that the King had a very fine throat without those great dewlaps which he gives himself by tying up his neckcloth so tightly.

*January 7.*—Rode up to London. Dined at Henry Shepherd's. Met Baillie and Cullen. Lady M. S. told me she was like Sardanapalus; she liked pleasure, but she would impart as much as she felt!

*January 9.* — Dined at F. Byng's. Young Greville, two Mills, and Lord Albanley there.

1822. The latter very agreeable. He told me that Talleyrand, with whom he had been living at Valençay, never spoke of Buonaparte except in terms of great respect. Talleyrand considered himself ill-used, and therefore fairly entitled to do all he could to dethrone Buonaparte.

Talleyrand told Alvanley that just before the campaign against Austria he came into the room where Napoleon was talking to the Russian Ambassador in a fit of madness, stamping and jumping on the chairs, and performing other freaks. When the Russian Ambassador went out of the room, Talleyrand asked Napoleon why he was in such transports of rage. Napoleon told him he had put on that "mien" to make the Russian write to his Court, and advise it to keep to its neutrality. "I never was cooler in my life," said Napoleon; "tâtez mon pouls," which Talleyrand did, and found the pulse quite as usual, which was very slow.

*January 22.*—Rode up to London. Dined with Joseph Hume. A large party—Bishop of Norwich there. He is a hale old man of seventy-seven. Before dinner he introduced himself to me, and, asking after my health, said every friend of his country must be interested in that health. I record this compliment on account of the excellent person from whom it came.

*January 23.*—Called on Murray and had a talk about Lord Byron. I find Murray has retained the Attorney-General in case he should be pro-

secuted, as threatened, for publishing "Cain." 1822.  
Murray tells me that Lord Holland does not like "Cain"; and that the volume does not sell, although he printed only 6,000 instead of 12,000. Thus I am more and more convinced of the correctness of my judgment concerning this publication.

*February 5.* — I went down to House of Commons. King's Speech read by Speaker—a mere nothing.

*February 6.*—Went to orchestra to see Kean play Othello. He was very great; but I do not think I was so much struck with him as on the first night I saw that play.

A letter from Byron, who now turns his menace into a joke, and says he meant nothing. So far so well. Lady Noel is dead.

*March 2.*—Dined with Lambton—an immense party and splendid dinner. I sat next to Ricardo, who told me he never thought of political economy till happening one day, during an illness of his wife, to be at Bath, he saw an Adam Smith in a circulating library, and turning over a page or two ordered it to be sent to his house. He liked it so much as to acquire a taste for the study.

*March 7.*—Dined at Brooks's—a great party, to celebrate, as Lambton said, the withdrawing of the Duke of Buckingham and the Grenvilles from the Club. A dull dinner and a dear one. Palmerston alluded to it in last night's debate. Lord Londonderry alluded to Coke's marriage,



1822. this night's debate, and indeed these personal jokes are now becoming common on the other side.

*March 11.*—House of Commons on the Superannuation Act. King gives up £30,000 a year. Calcraft and Ridley gave him unqualified praise. The others did not come down. Bloomfield is turned out, and the Holland House people are foolish enough to think there is a chance they may come in. Sir James Graham told me that all the Ministerialists were in a rage at the Grenvilles being bought so dear, and said that if there was any opposition in Parliament the Ministry would not stand a week. C. Wynne spoke to-night, and said that if there were no provision for public servants except from Parliament, the monarchy would be changed into a republic.

*March 13.*—House of Commons. Lord Normanby brought forward his reduction of one Postmaster-General in a good speech for a young man. Robinson, Peel, and Castlereagh all defended the existence of useless places as necessary to keep up the influence of the Crown in the House and country. Even H. Banks revolted at this, and called it a monstrous and unheard-of proposition. It was thought that we should beat Ministers, but we had only 159 to 184.

Peel said to-night that the intelligence of the people increasing required increasing influence in the Crown!

*March 14.*—I heard yesterday from Kinnaird 1822.  
that Lord Glengall had called on him to tell him that he had heard from a friend of George Canning's that George Canning intended to attack me in the House on the first opportunity, and that he "could not live under my assault last session." Lord Glengall wished me to be on my guard and prepared. I made up my mind what to do, being rather eager than otherwise to bring to a conclusion my difference with Mr. Canning.

House of Commons. . . . Canning made no allusion to me, but had a fling or two at the reformers. He talked of the base insinuations of those who imputed pecuniary motives to public servants, although this motive had been aroused and justified by those Ministers the other night. We had only 88 against 273. The Ministers, unused to these majorities, gave a cheer.

*March 21.*—At House of Commons. Dined with Royal Society. Sat next to Mr. Babbage, the great arithmetician. He remarked to me that he had observed how much mechanical skill had of late taken the direction of improving printing. He told me that a tolerable-sized octavo volume cost, as far as *types and ink were concerned, only eightpence!*

*March 27.*—Canning this day appointed Governor-General of India.

At Brooks's. Mackintosh and one or two others had a *cause*. We talked of the character of the Pretender. Mackintosh mentioned the

1822. account given by Hume in his letter to Sir J. Pringle. The Pretender certainly changed his religion. He was at the coronation of George III. Mackintosh told me that there was a dispute similar to the present between laity and clergy as to bearing the expenses of paving, and a monk quoted from the Vulgate, "*Isti paveant, ego non pavebo.*"

*April 2.*—Had a talk with a Mr. Marshall on Finance. He has written much, and is a systematist, but he will help me in my projected motion on Window Tax, etc. He says he has worked hours with Hume, and found him the slowest man in the world.

*April 17.*—I read Madame de Staël's "*Considérations sur la Révolution française.*" A most excellent work, full of noble sentiments and of fine writing. What she says of England she, of course, cannot say so truly as when she speaks of her own country; but even then she is admirable.

*April 24.*—House of Commons. Lord Titchfield, presenting a petition for Hunt from Lynn, attacked Wynne, and talked of his change in the most placid tone possible. Burdett did not rise to bring on his promised motion for an address to the Crown to liberate Hunt until eight o'clock, and was very nervous. He made a strong case, but did not make a very powerful speech. . . . Secretary Peel spoke, and made a poor, pompous speech, calculated for the days of



French terror, and ended by saying that, even were the House to come to a unanimous vote, he should think himself bound still to advise the Crown not to liberate Hunt. Mackintosh answered Peel, and remarked this flight; and Burdett, in his reply, told Peel "'twas a vapour." 1822.

Peel does not train on. I see he can't keep his temper. Still, he strings words together, and being the head of the intolerants, is well listened to. The Duke of York says he is a Peelite. We divided—89, I believe, against more than 200.

*April 25.*—The House very full. Lord John Russell spoke two hours and three-quarters very well indeed. He proposed one hundred new members to be added, and one hundred old members taken away from rotten boroughs. This was a great step for him. He had taken great pains. His details were curious. In short, it was an excellent statement—no powerful arguments, no such combinations as the great man of other days produced in favour of Reform, but an excellent and appropriate statement which it was very difficult to touch, and so the whole House felt.

I went to dinner. . . . At last I heard Canning was up, and ran down as fast as I could and took my seat opposite to him. He had been looking at me—I think I caught him so doing at least many times during the debate—and there was a general expectation certainly that he would attack me. But no such thing! He made a pretty, agreeable, polite, and eloquent speech;

1822. not touching the argument, to be sure, but not offending any one. On the contrary, he complimented Lord John, complimented Lambton, and complimented the Radicals on their sincerity. There was a studied civility of tone throughout. He was much cheered, and Sir T. Lethbridge said he had won his vote.

We divided—164 against 269. A great division indeed, and shouted loudly when the numbers were announced.

*April 26.*—I read an article in *Edinburgh Review* on Byron's tragedies. Very well done; but Byron will not have any criticisms that are unfavourable sent out to him.

*April 28.*—I went to Whitton. Found a letter from Byron and papers giving me an account of an affray at Pisa, in which his servants are implicated.

*April 29.*—Wrote to Byron. Rode up to London. . . . Dined with Kinnaird. Tom Moore, the poet, Jeffrey, etc.

☞ Moore talked to me about the transaction between him and Lord Byron, as to writing my lord's life. He told me that Lord Holland had said to him he wished he had got the money some other way, and that Lord Lansdowne had said to him that the publication of the *Memoirs* might be a matter for his after-consideration; that these two hints had made him resolve to take the *Memoirs* out of Murray's hands, and provide for the £2,000 some other way. He

told me that he had not looked over the indenture carefully, and that, being careless himself, and confident in his own honour, he had not thought of the interpretation which might be put upon his contract. He added, he had no idea that he was to be in possession of Byron's friend's letters, in order to make use of them. He was anxious Byron should know he had made up his mind, in consequence of what he had heard from the two lords. 1822.

*April 30.*—Went to the House of Commons. Very full. Heard Canning make his speech in favour of admission of Catholic peers into House of Peers. Argumentative, but not lively. Peel and Wetherell antagonists on the other side. Plunket spoke forcibly. Canning replied very well—but no fun, no sarcasm. He seemed in earnest. Burdett thought his reply one of the best speeches he ever heard him make. We had 249 to 244.

*May 3.*—At the House of Commons, where Ministers continue to develop their great schemes, which neither they nor any one else seem to believe can do any good.

*May 4.*—Dined to-day at Ellice's, in Spring Gardens. A large party. The celebrated Miss Edgeworth and her two sisters there. She was not affected at all. She is showing London and the world to her two sisters, and, they tell me, takes incredible pains to go through the ceremony with them.



1822. *May 10.*—At the House of Commons. Canning read his Catholic Peers Bill a second time by a majority of twelve. His answering speech was very good indeed, as I told his friend Courtenay the next day, who confessed to me that Canning's jocose speeches were the worst, and that Canning was well aware of it. The death of two or three Irish prelates, one accidentally poisoned by his wife, made us fear that the majority would diminish.

*May 16.*—House of Commons. Warnè's motion respecting Wynne's embassy to Switzerland came on, and we were beat completely. I overheard Lethbridge say the night before, "I shall vote with them to-night. I think it does good to yield a point or two to the people now and then"—as if the people were the great enemy; but the country gentlemen generally voted against us. This seems the last great battle for the year, and the Opposition are now as low as ever—141 to 247.

*May 22.*—Dined at Brooks's. Lord Thanet came in; told us he had danced with the Queen of France when a boy at Versailles. She sent to him to order him to dance with her. He described her good-looking, very easy, but well-bred.

*May 30.*—Dressed in Court clothes and went to the dress-ball at the Opera House. A very splendid gewgaw, but I never saw anything like our King. He entered with a flourish of trumpets, and seated himself down under his great canopy



like King Solomon in all his glory. Lord Yarmouth told me that the King intended to walk about amongst his subjects, but he did not; he only went into one or two boxes. He had the opera dancers dancing just under his box within a rope, and looked to me like a Pasha more than a Christian Prince. We got away a little after two o'clock, and the party left Albany about four. The lady patronesses all sat together in a way which pleased no one. This exclusive sort of grandeur does not belong to English society, and has only been lately tried. Lord Londonderry had on a fine coat covered with diamonds. All the great people were there, and a great many little people.

*June 3.*—Lord Londonderry told Lord Tavistock the other day that *he was sick of the concern, and that if he could well get out of it, would never get into it again.* He said, “*You don't come often amongst us. . . . I don't wonder at it.*”

*June 5.*—House of Commons. Peel brought on the Aliens Bill in a very wretched speech. He has been lately very flippant, and particularly to Burdett. Mackintosh answered him. I was ready to speak, but did not, although I had some time ago said that if the Bill was not argued by Ministers I would move adjournments. Lord Londonderry said we *lived amidst the ruins of empires.* We divided at twelve o'clock—92 to 189.

Peel announced second reading for the 19th, so we allowed him to read his Bill a first time.

1822. *June 10.*—Voted with George Canning in a minority of 21 against 116. The proposition was for allowing warehoused corn to be ground and exported. Lord Londonderry had supported it the other night, and the majority had been 140 (about) to 43. Finding the agriculturists now against it, he gave it up, and left George Canning to his fate. George Canning looked very foolish, though he had been in a very honest set of Radicals, and had made a very good speech. A charming proof of Parliamentary virtue.

*June 18.*—Went with Lambton to Southwark electors' dinner. Baron de Staël with us. He remarked to me that the House of Commons was the most aristocratic assembly in the world, and that they showed it even by that very neglect of dress which made short-sighted people suspect them to be otherwise.

*June 26.*—Spent morning in making calls, want of doing which throws a man out of society.

*June 27.*—My birthday. I do not know whether it is worth while to record it, but it seems to me that both my body and mind have undergone a change for the worse during the last year. My attendance in the House of Commons has certainly broken my health, and I have nothing in the way of Parliamentary exertion to show for it this session. I should hope that the period for declining intellect is not yet come, and yet I do feel something very like decay of the poor faculties which I think used to put me formerly something,

but not much, above par. My memory is very much shattered, and I have not the same power of application which I used to possess. I think, however, that perhaps a reform of habits altogether might bring me back to a tolerable condition, though it would not restore me to the liveliness of twenty-five. I feel confident I shall not live much longer, so what I intend to do in this world I must do quickly. . . . 1822.

I find I hate politics more than ever, but I cannot conceal from myself that one of the causes is that I am not qualified for making what is called a "figure" in the House of Commons. I am too much afraid of failing ever to succeed. An honest man in Parliament, however, I can be—I think I may add, I will be. If the Westminster men are not contented with that, let them turn me out. I trust I shall be able to bear that which will be no disgrace. I write this on this day—June 27, 1822.

*July 2.*—House of Commons. I began my speech for repeal of Window Tax at half-past six, and spoke till near eight, moving three resolutions—one against taxation, one against Sinking Fund, and a third for repeal of Window Tax.

We divided a little before eleven—59 to 144—which, all things considered, was a good division. The repeal was for more than £2,500,000 of taxes. I had great compliments from all sides on the speech. Ricardo told me that, though he did not agree with all my political economy, yet what I

1822. said was very well said. Joseph Hume showed the frailty of man in not being so well pleased with the part about the Sinking Fund, because he had taken up the subject himself, but he praised the rest. *The Times* and other papers praised the effort, and, on the whole, I think my pains were not thrown away. The tax will go next.

*July 13.*—Settled to take two of my sisters and my brother Edward a tour on the Continent.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE BYRON SEPARATION

[This chapter, giving Mr. Hobhouse's detailed account of the separation of Lord and Lady Byron, is placed at the end of these volumes in order to avoid interrupting the narrative of events recorded in them. See vol. i. p. 340.]

IN the autumn of 1812, Lord Byron, after a very short acquaintance with Miss Milbanke, only child and heiress of Sir Ralph Milbanke (now Sir Ralph Noel), made her a proposal of marriage, which she did not accept. The reason given, not by herself, but by those who pretended an acquaintance with the fact, was the presumed principles, moral and religious, of his Lordship. After this refusal, Lord Byron very seldom saw Miss Milbanke, but that young lady corresponded with him, and that in a style so particular as not to be misunderstood by any indifferent person. His Lordship, however, did not come to the same conclusion with that deduced by the *one* of his friends to whom he showed those letters, but believed that a certain eccentricity of education and consequent feeling had produced this communication from a young woman, otherwise notorious for the strictest propriety of conduct and demeanour. He did not draw any inference favourable to himself.

1812

1814. Those, indeed, who are acquainted with his Lordship are aware that no man requires so much encouragement from any woman, and that no one is more easily abashed than himself. Lord Byron was in the habit of expressing himself in terms of considerable regard for Miss Milbanke; although it cannot be supposed that her rejection of him had sunk very deep into his heart, or preyed upon his spirits. Lord Byron has no hypocrisy of any kind. He did not pretend to regret deeply the refusal of Miss Milbanke. Perhaps it may be said that he did not pretend to regret it at all. At the same time he spoke of her with respect, and generally added that she was right in not accepting him. His friends recollect a ludicrous scene that passed between him and an acquaintance, who came to him one day, and, after much distress, burst into a flood of tears, which scarcely allowed him to explain the cause of his sorrow. After many sighs, he disclosed the painful secret "that he had been refused by Miss Milbanke."

"Is that all?" said Lord Byron; "perhaps then it will be some consolation for you to know that I also have been refused by Miss Milbanke."

His Lordship knew his acquaintance very well; it *was* a consolation to him to find that the young lady must have some *general* objection to rank and talents.

After the correspondence had been carried on some time, and certain expressions had been

dropped by Miss Milbanke in her letters which might have surely encouraged a bolder man than his Lordship, Lord Byron was in the habit of speaking to one of his friends, half seriously, on the expediency of making another effort for the hand that held the pen. 1814.

He remarked an expression or hint "that Miss Milbanke had *herself* never refused him," that her rejection had been caused by some false forms in the mode of application, which, to be sure, was rather singular; for the proposal had been made by Lady Melbourne to the mother of the young lady.

Considering Miss Milbanke a very amiable person, of the strictest purity, and possessed of such a fortune as would be indispensable for Lord Byron in any connection he might form, he resolved then to risk what some people might look upon as a disgrace, namely, a second refusal; and wrote a letter from his sister's house, near Newmarket, to his correspondent at Seaham, in the county of Durham, in which letter he renewed his proposal. By the same post he wrote to his friend, Mr. Hobhouse, to request to know whether he felt inclined to travel on the Continent, and take a journey which, he said, he was resolved upon, and would certainly undertake, "unless the most improbable thing in the world happened." What this improbable thing was Lord Byron did not mention; but improbable as it was, it had taken place by the time Mr. Hobhouse



1814. had returned an answer in the affirmative; for *Miss Milbanke had accepted Lord Byron by return of post.*

His Lordship, on being accepted, went, very shortly afterwards, to the house of Sir Ralph Milbanke, in the county of Durham, and there formed his first *intimacy* with his future wife. This was in October. In the third week in November he left Seaham, and came to Cambridge to vote for his acquaintance Dr. Clarke, candidate for the Professorship of Anatomy. On Wednesday, the 23rd of that month, he received a decided and most flattering tribute of the admiration of his fellow-countrymen, and a certain proof of the undisputed excellence to which he had raised his name as the poet of the age. For when he ascended the step of the Senate House to give his vote he was welcomed by several peals of applause from the students in the gallery, and received the same notice on retiring from the table. This distinction to a literary character has never before been paid, except in the instance of Archdeacon Paley. Lord Byron was much affected, and withdrew with much haste from the crowd, who were pressing on all sides to catch a view of the author of "Childe Harold" and the "Corsair." He was then at the height of his reputation; which, although it was as brilliant in the remotest village of Scotland as at his own University, could nowhere be so displayed to his own eyes as at the birthplace of



his own muse, and the parent of a Milton, a Dryden, and a Gray. 1814.

Melius si tunc dederat Campania febres.

A fen-fever would have then left him in the meridian of his fame. His friends, however, do not despair of his genius, and of that good fortune the consciousness of which is the great spring of perseverance, and operates upon no heart more than upon that of Lord Byron.

On December 24 Lord Byron left London for Seaham, accompanied by Mr. Hobhouse. The ground was covered with snow when they arrived at Newark, and the frost was so biting that the servants could with difficulty support themselves on the box of the carriage. Lord Byron frankly confessed to his companion that he was not in love with his intended bride; but at the same time he said that he felt for her that regard which he believed was the surest guarantee of continued affection and matrimonial felicity. He owned that he had felt considerable repugnance in marrying before his pecuniary affairs were arranged, so as to insure a sufficient income to his wife and himself immediately upon their marriage; and he had been so far influenced by this feeling as to make an offer of waiting a year or two (considering himself in the interval as an *engaged* man) before the marriage should take place. There was no delusion employed by Lord Byron—he never hid his poverty—he never con-

1814. cealed his sentiments or altered his way of talking in presence of Miss Milbanke—he was not precipitate or even eager in hastening the match—and, certainly, gave his wife's family and the lady herself every opportunity of delaying, if not of breaking off, the connection. It is not true that he talked of what is called “a reform of his principles and life” as the consequence of his marriage; and that he held out such a reform as the charitable inducement to obtain for him this happiness. His Lordship was a man of the world, in the usual sense of the phrase, but, except as a man of the world, he had no principles, no course of life, to reform. He was more guarded in his exterior than Charles Surface, but had none of the hypocrisy of Joseph Surface. He was, with the addition of great talents, great character, great kindness, and a power of fascination rarely if ever possessed by any man of his age, just such a person as a public school, an university, and two seasons in London, are likely to make of any nobleman. To talk of reform, then, would have been an insult on the good sense of Miss Milbanke, and would have been received, as it must have been uttered, with a smile.

Without having recourse to the employment of any craft or incantation, we may venture to account for Miss Milbanke marrying Lord Byron by the simple statement that she was very much in love with him. This—and she need not blush

at her selection—was the fact, and induced her to reject his Lordship's offer of delay. Lord Byron arrived at Seaham at eight o'clock on Friday evening, December 30. The next day was chiefly occupied in signing the marriage settlements: by these settlements his Lordship was to receive the interest of £20,000 at present with his wife, but of this income was to pay £300 per annum to her Ladyship for pin money; so that his actual gain by marrying was £700 a year. In return for this addition to his income, Lord Byron settled on her Ladyship £60,000 upon his Newstead estate, a sum which after his debts were paid would scarcely remain out of that property and his estate at Rochdale. Miss Milbanke was heiress to a property of about £7,000 a year, then in the hands of her uncle, Viscount Wentworth, which would be possessed by her mother after his Lordship's death, and upon her demise devolve to her daughter. 1814.

It might be supposed that the Milbanke family considered this contingency as a set-off against Lord Byron's settlement, for they made no proposal of securing any part of Sir Ralph's estate to his Lordship; and although Mr. Hanson, Lord B.'s solicitor, informed his Lordship that he might fairly demand such a condition, Lord Byron refused positively any attempt at such a bargain, and would make no claim of the kind—so that Miss Milbanke was to Lord Byron *no heiress*; and the pecuniary advantage was altogether on



1814. the side of the Lady, and not of his Lordship. The death of Lady Byron, as the articles stood and now stand, would leave Lord Byron in any case without any addition to his own fortune. The death of Lord Byron would leave Lady Byron in possession of £2,000 per annum (she not having a male child, which would have given her £3,000), arising from his Lordship's estates, besides her own property. No! if Lord Byron had married for money he would have attached himself elsewhere. He did think that his wife would one day bring such an addition to their fortune as would enable them to live conformably to their station. But he did not marry for money. He married because he thought he *should* marry, and because he thought Miss Milbanke, on the whole, a suitable person, and one with whom the experiment might be made with the best chance of success. He married for the same reason that causes the great majority of all matches—for a love of change and curiosity, and a feeling of a sort of necessity attached to doing such a thing once; but not for love certainly, nor for money. Miss Milbanke may have been deceived in the expectations she formed in uniting herself with Lord Byron, but she was not deceived by Lord Byron, she was deceived by herself. A little less passion and a little more reflection would have convinced her of the propriety of accepting Lord Byron's proposal of delay. However, his Lordship, though he manifested none



of the impatience of the bridegroom in his four days' journey, nor behaved in the usual awkward and ardent fashion so embarrassing to the lookers-on in such hours of attendance, was not deficient in the proper attentions and tokens of regard. Miss Milbanke, although she gazed with delight on the open, animated front of her future husband, and betrayed her fondness in every glance, was no less sensible and decent, and never suffered herself to be betrayed into any of those airs and affectations which bespeak as little real fondness as sense of decorum. They were married on January 2, 1815, in the drawing-room at Seaham, by Mr. Thomas Noel, rector of Kirkby Mallory, in Leicestershire, and an illegitimate son of Viscount Wentworth. The persons present on the occasion were—Sir Ralph and Lady Milbanke; Mrs. Clermont, governess to the young lady; Mr. Hobhouse; and the Rev. Mr. Wallace, rector of Seaham, who assisted in his canonicals.

The marriage took place at eleven o'clock, and in an hour afterwards Lord and Lady Byron left Seaham for Halnaby, the house of Sir R. Milbanke, in Yorkshire. They remained at Halnaby about a fortnight, when they returned to Seaham. At Seaham they continued until the end of March, when they came up to London and settled on the 29th of that month in a house, No. 13, Piccadilly Terrace, belonging to the Duchess of Devonshire. It had been his Lordship's wish to remain in the country, on account of his desire to avoid setting

1815. up any establishment in the present state of his circumstances; but Lady Byron, thinking, perhaps, that he would find more amusements in London, persuaded him to quit Seaham. Lord Byron resolved to sell his Newstead estate, in order to secure an immediate income, and took measures accordingly, for the £6,000, which was the only capital sum which he was to have put into his hands out of the £20,000, and which he was also to *secure* upon his estate, was not paid him until several months after his marriage—nearly a year—so that he was left totally without provision, and exposed to every demand of his creditors, whom his marriage had, as usual, made impatient. On July 28 he made an attempt to sell both his estates of Newstead and Rochdale by auction at Garraway's, but without success, very much to the chagrin not only of himself but of Lady Milbanke, who was in London, and who expressed herself in terms of much regret thereat to Mr. Hobhouse, who thought that the eagerness of her Ladyship in pushing Lord Byron, after having married a reputed heiress, to part with a property which had been in his family since the reign of Henry VIII., had an indecent appearance, and should be concealed from Lord Byron. He did not, therefore, mention this to his Lordship. Previously to this period, some time in April, Viscount Wentworth had died, and the Kirkby Mallory property had fallen into the hands of Lady Milbanke, who

then became Lady Noel. Circumstances, however, had prevented Lord and Lady Byron from receiving the least benefit from this accession of property to their father and mother, and from the moment of the useless effort to sell the Newstead and other estates, Lord Byron's difficulties began to increase.<sup>1</sup> It was impossible, however, for any couple to live in more apparent harmony; indeed, it was the fear of some friends that his Lordship confined himself too much with Lady Byron, and that occasional separation—for they were never seen apart—might be more conducive to their comfort. It was about the end of November that Lord Byron had begun to talk vaguely with one friend of the absolute necessity of his breaking up his establishment after Lady Byron should have been confined. After her confinement, which took place on December 11, his Lordship renewed this conversation with his friend, and owned that his pecuniary embarrassments were such as to *drive him half-mad*. He said "he should think lightly of them *were he not married*"—he wished "he could go abroad." This he said once or twice, but afterwards dropped that expression and talked of going down into the country. He said "that no one could know what he had gone through"; that no man should marry—it doubled all his misfortunes, and diminished all his comforts. "My wife," he always added, "is perfection itself—the best

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.



1816. creature breathing; but, mind what I say—*don't marry.*" Such was his talk with one of his friends, and only one.

When Lady Byron was sufficiently recovered, she left London and went to Kirkby Mallory. This was on January 15, 1816. Lord Byron told his friends generally that Lady Byron was gone into the country for her health, and added to Mr. Hobhouse that he should take that opportunity of breaking up his establishment. Shortly after his wife left him, he said to that gentleman, "They want me to go into the country. I shall go soon, but I won't go yet. I should not care if Lady Byron was alone, but I can't stand Lady Noel." He afterwards repeated to Mr. Hobhouse "that his family and Lady Byron wished him to come down to Kirkby immediately," and he fixed a day for his doing so in the hearing of his friend. The day after Lady Byron left London he received a letter from her, dated Woburn, and the next day came to him the following letter, with which we will open the correspondence, and which will account for Lord Byron's persuasion that his company was desired at Kirkby.

"KIRKBY, *January 16, 1816.*

"DEAREST DUCK,—

"We got here quite well last night, and were ushered into the kitchen instead of drawing-room, by a mistake that might have been agreeable enough to hungry people. . . . Of this and other incidents Dad wants to write you a jocose



account, and both he and Mam long to have the family party completed. . . . Such . . . ! and such a *sitting*-room or *sulking*-room, all to yourself. If I were not always looking about for B—I should be a great deal better already for country air. *Miss* finds her provisions increased, and fattens thereon. It is a good thing she can't understand all the flattery bestowed upon her. 'Little angel' . . . and I know not what . . . Love to the good goose, and everybody's love to you both from hence. 1816.

"Ever thy most loving,

"PIPPIN . . . PIP . . . IP.

(*Direction.*)

"THE LORD BYRON,

"13, PICCADILLY TERRACE,

"LONDON."

It is necessary to observe the address of this letter, which is marked with the Hinckley post-mark, because one of the absurd stories circulated with respect to this singular document was that it was conveyed to a medical gentleman to be shown to Lord Byron, who had, it was added, address enough first of all to extort it from him, and, secondly, meanness enough to retain it as a proof, that what was only meant to be administered as a medicine was, in fact, an evidence of her Ladyship's affection, and of her wish to see her husband at Kirkby.

Certain it is that this letter was addressed to Lord Byron, and reached him by the regular post without going through any intermediate hands, and if his Lordship did not guess that it was written (as her Ladyship afterwards avowed it to be)

1816. merely as a prescription against a paroxysm, those who have not been accustomed to see such moral applications made to madness, will feel inclined to pity if not to pardon the mistake. It may be requisite to mention that the "good goose" of this epistle is Mrs. Leigh, and that the "Pippin . . . Pip . . . Ip" stands for her Ladyship, who was occasionally designated by Lord Byron under that playful appellation.

His Lordship did not return any answer to this letter, having for some time discontinued to correspond even with those friends with whom he was in habits of the utmost intimacy, and having agreed that his sister, Mrs. Leigh, should convey in her letter to Lady Byron any intelligence which she might wish to learn respecting himself and his intentions. The very close and unreserved friendship existing between Mrs. Leigh and Lady Byron rendered this arrangement by no means embarrassing—although there can be no doubt but that a direct correspondence with her husband would have been more satisfactory to her Ladyship, and might, perhaps, in the present instance, have delayed, if not prevented, the ensuing catastrophe. It was not unnatural that a person who had adopted the notion that she was the object of hate to her husband should, in spite of all acquaintance with his habits, and even of an understood stipulation, regard his silence as a proof that her suspicions were not unfounded.

Had Lord Byron written an answer to the above letter, either in his imputed character of insanity or in his usual style, it is scarcely possible that she should have adopted the measure which ensued so shortly upon this affectionate communication, of which there can be but one opinion, namely, that considered as a fond, free, and familiar epistle from an anxious wife to an absent and expected husband, it does credit to her feelings no less than it is indicative of her affections; but that supposing it to be written by an injured and terrified woman to soothe the insanity and play with the pernicious propensities of him to whom she was unhappily allied, it must be pronounced as little admirable for its artifice as it is for its composition.

It was about five or six days after the date of this invitation to Kirkby that Lady Noel and Mrs. Clermont came to London, for the purpose of providing means to secure a separation between Lord and Lady Byron; it must therefore have been in this interval of a few days that the resolution to this effect had been taken by the family at Kirkby, and consequently that resolution must have been founded on what had happened during the time that Lord and Lady Byron lived together, and not on any subsequent conduct of his Lordship after she had left London; unless we suppose, as above, that the non-acknowledgment of the letter had given the immediate determination to a mind before suspicious and



1816. partially estranged. No one, after reading the letter just given, can doubt but that if Lord Byron, whether sane or not, had arrived at Kirkby shortly after the receipt of that letter, he would, indeed he must, have been received as before, both by her who was "*always looking about for B.*," and by those who "*longed to have the family party completed*" by his arrival.

What happened in the interval between the date of the letter and Lady Noel's departure for London it was impossible for Lord Byron exactly to understand; but it is certain that his wife must have made some communication to her family which produced the immediate journey of Lady Noel. It was something which *she told* and not anything which *he did* subsequently to Lady Byron's leaving London, that caused this abrupt change in the disposition of his father and mother-in-law towards him. It appears that when Lady Noel arrived in London she made no secret of her intentions, for she expressed herself in the most violent terms against his Lordship, not only to Mrs. Leigh but also to Mr. Le Mann, the medical man employed by Lady Byron at the time of her lying-in, and introduced to Lord Byron by his wife as a person whom she could confidently advise him to consult. Mrs. Leigh represented to Lady Noel "that in the present state of her brother's health, she could not but apprehend some dreadful catastrophe as the consequence of abruptly breaking to him



the resolution of the family." It must here be told, that Mrs. Leigh certainly conceived her brother to be suffering under a malady which had a tendency to mental derangement, and believed that he had even given signs that his disease, a *torpidity of liver*, had produced that dreadful effect. In consequence of this persuasion, she went so far as to hint that "she believed that the announcing a separation to Lord Byron might induce him to put an end to his existence." To which Lady Noel replied, "So much the better; it is not fit such men should live." 1816.

To Mr. Le Mann her Ladyship was equally unreserved in her communications, and made use of such language that Mrs. Clermont exclaimed, "*Pooh! do not be so violent, you talk like a child*"—a reproof no less expressive of the extravagance of the one than of the influence of the other lady. Mr. Le Mann informed Lady Noel "that Lord Byron had mended considerably in his health, and that he hoped his Lordship would be very soon able to join Lady Byron at Kirkby." Lady Noel instantly remarked "that if his Lordship did come down to Kirkby, the doors should be shut against him." To which Mr. Le Mann replied, "that he had, hitherto *in concert with Lady Byron*, been using his utmost efforts to enable and persuade Lord Byron to go to Kirkby, but that as he learnt that such a step might lead him into a most disagreeable

1816. dilemma, he certainly would not be accessory to such a step, and should cease to press his Lordship's departure." Mr. Le Mann (as well as Mrs. Leigh) had until this moment been in confidential correspondence with Lady Byron on the subject of his Lordship's health, and with the understanding, expressed repeatedly by her Ladyship, that he should make every exertion to induce Lord Byron to join her at Kirkby. He ceased to write to Lady Byron from the time of his communication with Lady Noel, except on one occasion hereafter to be mentioned. He conceived that Lady Byron having so entirely changed her mind, at least according to Lady Noel's representation, from what it was when she agreed to correspond with him, it would be making himself a party against Lord Byron, and be a treachery towards his patient as well as an unjustifiable encouragement of Lady Byron's present resolutions, so different from what he knew them to be when she left London, if he continued to hold any communication with her after her announced determination to separate from Lord Byron. It should be understood that this determination was not announced to Lord Byron by the family, nor hinted at by Mr. Le Mann to him, during Lady Noel's visit to London, which she left in about a week and returned to Kirkby. Immediately after her return, Sir Ralph Noel wrote to Lord Byron a letter which Mrs. Leigh, supposing it to contain the result of Lady

Noel's journey to town, and wishing to give her brother a chance of still averting this proposal, returned unopened to Kirkby. Sir Ralph Noel came to London immediately, and on Friday, February 2, Lord Byron received the following letter, which is certainly not quite of that "*jocose*" kind which Lady Byron had announced it was in the contemplation of her "*Dad to pen to his son-in-law.*" 1816.

"MIVART'S HOTEL, 44, LOWER BROOK STREET,  
"February 2, 1816.

"MY LORD,—

"However painful it may be to me, I find myself compelled by every feeling as a parent, and principle as a man, to address your Lordship on a subject which I hardly suppose will be any surprise to you. *Very recently*, circumstances have come to my knowledge, which convince me, that with your opinions it cannot tend to your happiness to continue to live with Lady Byron, and I am yet more forcibly convinced that after her dismissal from your house, and the treatment she experienced whilst in it, those on whose protection she has the strongest natural claims could not feel themselves justified in permitting her return thither.

"It would be idle to recapitulate to your Lordship at this time what is well known to you, though, should it become necessary, I am ready to avow to the public my reasons for this belief, and my motives for acting on it; but satisfied as I am that the measure I am now compelled to suggest is imperiously called for by facts capable of the clearest proof, and that my conduct and that of all those connected with me, will bear the test of the most rigid public investigation,



1816. yet as publicity in domestic affairs is never desirable (in which sentiment I apprehend your Lordship must concur), I therefore propose that a *professional friend* should be fixed on by you to confer with a person of the same description appointed by me, that they may discuss and settle such terms of separation as may be mutually approved. I cannot doubt your Lordship's concurrence to this proposal from many declarations you have made, and your avowed intention of going abroad as a single man, or taking a lodging in London and living there as one—therefore hope to have as immediate an answer as possible directed to me at Mivart's Hotel.

“ I remain, my Lord,

“ Your obedient servt.,

“ RA : NOEL.

“ THE RT. HONOURABLE

“ LORD BYRON,

“ PICCADILLY TERRACE.”

The foregoing letter was positively the first intimation received by Lord Byron of any intention on the part of Lady Byron to demand a separation from him. He had not guessed at the possibility of such a measure when Lady Byron left him, she having *lived* with him, as his wife, up to the day of her departure : and, if the letter dated on the 16th from Kirkby did not make him suspicious, it must be confessed, that, though her Ladyship may be extolled for the ingenuity of her artifice, Lord Byron cannot be blamed for dullness of apprehension. His Lordship did not believe that Sir Ralph Noel acted upon the voluntary direction of his daughter ; and it is



no hardihood of assertion to declare, that no man living who had been addressed by his wife as her "dearest duck," on the 16th of one month, and never having had it in his power to commit a single fault against her in the interval, had been commanded by her father, on the 2nd of the next month, to loose her for ever, but would have questioned the authority from which emanated such a proposition; and would have thought it, at the least, very probable that his wife had been belied and he had been abused. Lord Byron, on the receipt of the foregoing letter, directed his sister, Mrs. Leigh, to write immediately to Lady Byron in terms of inquiry relative to her share in this extraordinary proceeding; and his Lordship, at the same time, addressed the following letter to Sir Ralph Noel:

*"February 2, 1816.*

"SIR,—

"I have received your letter. To the vague and general charge contained in it I must naturally be at a loss how to answer—I shall therefore confine myself to the tangible fact which you are pleased to alledge as one of the motives for your present proposition. Lady Byron received no dismissal from my house in the sense you have attached to the word. She left London by medical advice. She parted from me in apparent and, on my part, real harmony, though at that particular time, rather against my inclination, for I begged her to remain with the intention of myself accompanying her: when some business necessary to be arranged prevented my departure.

1816.

“It is true that previous to this period I had suggested to her the expediency of a temporary residence with her parents. My reason for this was very simple and shortly stated, viz. the embarrassment of my circumstances, and my inability to maintain our present establishment. The truth of what is thus stated may be easily ascertained by reference to Lady B.—who is truth itself. If she denies it, I abide by that denial.

“My intention of going abroad originated in the same painful motive and was postponed from a regard to her supposed feelings on that subject. During the last year I have had to contend with distress without and disease within. Upon the former I have little to say—except that I have endeavoured to remove it by every sacrifice in my power; and the latter I should not mention if I had not professional authority for saying that the disorder that I have to combat, without much impairing my apparent health, is such as to induce a morbid irritability of temper,<sup>1</sup> which without recurring to external causes may have rendered me little less disagreeable to others than I am to myself. I am, however, ignorant of any particular ill-treatment which your daughter has encountered. She may have seen me gloomy, and at times violent; but she knows the causes too well to attribute such inequalities of disposition to herself, or even to me, if all things be fairly considered. And now, Sir, not for your satisfaction—for I owe you none—but for my own, and in justice to Lady Byron, it is my duty to say that there is no part of her conduct, character, temper, talents, or disposition, which could in my opinion have been changed for the better. Neither in word or deed, nor (as far as thought can be dived into) thought, can I bring to my

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

recollection a fault on her part, or hardly even a failing. She has ever appeared to me as one of the most amiable of human beings, and nearer to perfection than I had conceived could belong to humanity in its present state of existence. Having said thus much, though more in words, less in substance, than I wished to express, I come to the point—on which subject I must for a few days decline giving a decisive answer. I will not, however, detain you longer than I can help, and as it is of some importance to your family as well as to mine, and a step which cannot be recalled when taken, you will not attribute my pause to any wish to inflict farther pain on you or yours—although there are parts of your letter which, I must be permitted to say, arrogate a right which you do not now possess; for the present at least, your daughter is my wife; she is the mother of my child; and till I have her express sanction of your proceedings, I shall take leave to doubt the propriety of your interference. This will be soon ascertained, and when it is, I will submit to you my determination, which will depend very materially on hers.

“I have the honour to be,

“Your most obed. and very humble servt.,

“BYRON.

“To SIR RALPH NOEL, BART.”

It may safely be asserted that it is morally impossible that any but a man unconscious of having committed any gross errors or crimes of a black dye could have given the foregoing firm though temperate answer to such a letter as that of Sir Ralph Noel: and in this fearless but moderate tone will it be seen, that Lord



1816. Byron not only received and replied to, *at first*, these threats at making his conduct public, but continued throughout the whole transaction to address himself to the family of his wife and to herself.

Lord Byron was right in telling Sir Ralph Noel that his charge against him was "vague and general"; it *has been vague and general* from the beginning to the end of the whole correspondence, and whenever there has been the least attempt at hinting at a fact, it has been as easily denied as the imputation of Lord Byron having turned Lady Byron out of his house. As to *publication*, it has not been Lord Byron who has shrunk from it, and her Ladyship's friends will be seen in the course of this affair to have made no little effort to prevent an open investigation of the whole matter: but the word was used, apparently, by people who laboured under the strange delusion that they were addressing a man whose conscience, containing a record of every crime, would admirably second their insinuations, and supply every deficiency in the positive facts prepared for their attacks against this self-convicted culprit. As Sir Ralph Noel quotes Lord Byron's "*opinions*" against him, so it will be seen that Lady Byron charges him with "*a determination to be wicked*"; and hence it is as clear as the day, that the actual foundation of Sir Ralph Noel's proposal to keep his daughter from her husband, must be



neither more nor less than some thing, or things, 1816  
which her Ladyship *said* to her father that Lord Byron *said* to her. Such a cause for separation—at least for a separation begun and carried on with the utmost indifference to the feelings and character of one of the parties, and with the unmixed charge of undeserved injury publicly imputed to that party—was never before attempted to be adduced in due form in the opening of such a proceeding. It was not likely that Lord Byron should at first believe that Lady Byron had been detailing to her family those “opinions” which Sir Ralph stated against him as disqualifying him for matrimony. He could not at all believe that Lady Byron had said she had been dismissed from his house, because he knew that not to be true. He knew that more than a week previous to her departure he had sent up to her a note in which he stated his wish that she would retire into the country a short time before he broke up his establishment, and he was certain that he had subjoined that he wished her to fix the precise time herself; he did not conceal from himself or friends that her Ladyship had been much offended with this note—that an altercation had ensued of very short duration—that she had declared herself satisfied—and that the affair terminated by a reconciliation that buried the whole matter in silence from that time forwards: that she herself fixed the day of her departure—that they lived on *conjugal* terms up to the last

1816. moment—and that so far from not intending to return, she had taken his Lordship's carriage and several receipts for large sums belonging to Lord Byron, which it is not likely a wife resolving to decamp for ever from her husband should venture to do. The fact may be perpetually repeated: *Lady Byron* when *she left Lord Byron* had *no notion whatever of a separation*. It is possible that her own opinions relative to Lord Byron's "opinions," as Sir Ralph called them, might have made her apprehend such an event as eventually possible; but that she left Piccadilly with the resolution of never again living with Lord Byron as his wife is *utterly false*, although it has been asserted positively by those who pretend to say they speak from the authority of Lady Byron. It will be time enough hereafter to endeavour to divine her Ladyship's real motives and conduct—at present we return to what took place at the commencement of this surprise upon Lord Byron.

On Saturday, February 3, Lord Byron himself wrote to Lady Byron, asking, in affectionate terms, for an explanation of Sir Ralph Noel's conduct. On the next day he received no communication from either branch of his wife's family. On the Monday no letter came from Lady Byron, nor from her family. It was on this day, February 5, that Mr. Hobhouse called on Lord Byron in Piccadilly. His first inquiry at the door was for Lady Byron's health, a question

1816.

that some time previously to her Ladyship's lying-in, and ever since that period, he had been in the constant habit of putting at his entrance into the house. William Fletcher, his Lordship's valet, answered Mr. Hobhouse that he feared her Ladyship was very ill indeed. Mr. H. found Lord Byron exceedingly depressed, more so than in an intimacy of eleven years he had ever seen. Lord B. at first seemed unwilling to mention the cause of his dejection; but at last, with tears in his eyes, and in an agitation which scarcely allowed him to speak, mentioned the proposition he had received from Sir Ralph Noel. He attributed the determination of his wife, if determination she had taken, to the influence of Lady Noel, and of Mrs. Clermont, the person before mentioned, who, from an upper servant in the family, had successively filled the station of governess of Miss Milbanke and confidante of her mother. He solemnly protested that Lady Byron and himself had parted friends; and that he was so far from contemplating such a measure on her part, that he had ordered horses for the following Sunday before Sir R. Noel's letter arrived on the preceding Friday. He as solemnly declared, that he could not *guess* at the immediate cause of this resolution. Mr. Hobhouse, for a few moments, could not trust his ears; he thought his friend must be the victim of some *hoax* or plot to alarm him, and when he heard the repetition of the story, believed it *impossible* that Lady



1816. Byron should have authorised her father to write the letter printed above. When Lord Byron showed him the letter from Lady Byron on the 16th, he was confirmed in his opinion that the Lady's parents, and not the Lady herself, had formed the scheme of withdrawing Lady Byron from her husband ; more especially as Sir R. Noel, in his letters, had *not* mentioned that he was authorised by his daughter to make the proposition. Mr. Hobhouse, therefore, begged permission to write a note to Lady Byron, and Lord Byron acceding willingly to this proposal, he accordingly addressed a few lines written in extreme haste and anxiety to her, in which "he entreated that he might be permitted to see her," asserted, with a confidence founded on the sincerest persuasion, "that in five minutes' conversation he could remove any suspicions formed as to the future intentions of his friend, and that, as he knew that the journey to the Continent with himself, which he understood to be one of the charges against his Lordship, was totally unfounded, he thought it certain he could disprove the other allegations. He prayed Lady Byron to allow him to come down to Kirkby immediately ; and with a warmth prompted by the extreme interest he felt on so distressing an occasion, ventured to call to her Ladyship's recollection how much she must be changed since that happy day when she promised Mr. Hobhouse, then handing her into her carriage on the morning

of her marriage, to be happy for life, and in return for his good wishes, asserted 'that if she were not happy, it would be her own fault.' "

Mr. Hobhouse did not show this note to Lord Byron, who also wrote to Lady Byron a short letter, which is here given in his own words :

" *February 5, 1816.*

" DEAREST BELL,—

" No answer from you yet; but perhaps it is as well; only do recollect that all is at stake, the present, the future, and even the colouring of the past. My errors, or by whatever harsher name you choose to call them, you know; but I loved you, and will not part from you without your express and expressed refusal to return to, or receive me. Only say the word that you are still mine in your heart, and

" 'Kate, I will buckler thee against a million.'

" Ever, dearest, yours most, etc.,      B."

So strong was the persuasion of Mr. Hobhouse that undue means had been resorted to in order to produce the proposed separation, that he conceived it very possible Lord Byron's letters might not be permitted to reach her Ladyship; and he therefore advised that this letter should be put under cover to Mrs. Fletcher, her lady's maid, and the wife of William Fletcher, my Lord's valet. Lord Byron had *then* a reason more strong than any conjectures founded on

1816. past conduct, for supposing that his wife was not a *free agent*, and this reason was founded on the positive assertion and representation of the above Mrs. Fletcher contained in a letter to her husband, and evidently written, not for the sake of establishing any case, for that she could not at the time contemplate, but given merely as a confidential communication to her husband. This letter mentioned her Ladyship's distress and agony to be at their height; that she was rolling on the floor in a paroxysm of grief at having *promised* to separate from Lord Byron; that she showed by words and actions that she was compelled by her family to quit her husband; and that her mind was perpetually in the balance between an adherence to what she had said, and a feeling for that which she wished really to do. It was thought necessary to reduce this important testimony afterwards to a legal form, and Mrs. Fletcher afterwards made affidavit of the substance of what she had written to her husband. This affidavit will be hereafter given in these papers. Mr. Hobhouse, on leaving Lord Byron, thought it his duty to write a second letter to Lady Byron, and as this letter contained as simple a statement of the case as could perhaps be made at that period of the transaction, the general tenor of it, and in most instances the very words, are given from the rough draft originally drawn of it.



“WHITTON PARK, *Tuesday, February 6.*

1816.

“MY DEAR LADY BYRON,—

“It was impossible to refrain, the instant I heard the sad news at your house yesterday, from sitting down and writing a few lines to save the post; and although my scrawl was written so hastily, and, let me say, in such extreme agitation, that I fear it was scarcely decipherable, you will at least have made out sufficient to understand what were my feelings at receiving so unexpected, so painful a piece of intelligence. I should, perhaps, have made more apology for intruding upon such an occasion, and I ought also, it is more than probable, to forbear from repeating that intrusion, but the hope, however faint, that a word from a person who cannot possibly have the least interest nor inclination to deceive, may arrest the progress of a measure fraught with such frightful consequences, has prompted me again to risk the hazard of your displeasure.

“Perhaps, Lady Byron, the long friendship and entire love for the man whom you have honoured by consenting to bear his name, may account to you for my interfering in a point so connected with his happiness, without my offering in excuse the very sincere interest which I take the liberty to feel in everything which concerns yourself. I cannot be supposed to be an adequate judge, however, of the effect which the meditated event would have on your future life. I can only speak of the misery, which I know, which I saw yesterday, would be the consequence of such a transaction, as far as my friend is concerned. If I had no other proof than that scene of yesterday of there having arisen some misapprehension, most unfounded, to cause such a catastrophe, I should be sufficiently convinced

1816. of the fact from my conversation with your husband only twelve hours ago. But I have other proofs which on occasion I should be most happy decidedly to produce, to show that mistake and nothing but mistake could be the foundation of those charges which have been made against my friend, from a quarter whence I confess it never entered my head they could possibly emanate. Could I speak one moment to Sir R. Noel, I could convince him how exceedingly he has been misled, or how misapprehended the exaggerations of common scandal or vulgar report. I could also convince him, that even admitting the imputations to the extent of his letter, he must have been very much misinformed to suppose that he or any authority has the legal power to draw the inference and come to the conclusion upon which he seems to insist. I could convince him that Lord Byron never will consent to so revolting a proposition, and that as to any ability on the part even of a father to force compliance, such an attempt, except in a father, would be a conspiracy, and even in him would not be maintainable for a moment. The word 'treatment' in Sir Ralph's letter is so vague as to have no meaning except to a person conscious of some great offence, and that no such offence could have existed, a letter written by yourself on the 16th of January would be sufficient proof to any unprejudiced person. Were I on my oath before a tribunal more solemn than any this world can furnish, I should say that in every conversation which I have had with Lord Byron respecting your Ladyship, he has always used words to the following effect and no other: 'I cannot be supposed to be happy under my present embarrassments, which are very much increased

by the circumstance of my being a married man. I have no complaint to make against Lady Byron, who is the very best woman living ; on the contrary, with any other wife I could not bear my situation for an instant.'

"I repeat that in no moment of distress or irritation has he ever even hinted at the least want of regard and esteem for his wife ; and I know that if he had felt such diminution of affection *he would have told me*. I am sure I *know the very worst of everything that can* be said against my friend, and in that very worst nothing is comprised which can bear out your friends in the extremity to which they seem inclined to proceed. I do not mean legally only, but morally. Certainly your Ladyship has a very high character in the world, and from certain transactions too notorious *before* Lord Byron's marriage, your friends would think that in any difference between such a couple, the censurers would be all on one side. But this neither can nor shall be the case whilst I have the power of showing how entirely those friends have been mistaken in the premises which they assume in order to justify their proceedings. What is expected from a husband, I cannot pretend to say ; but if unvaried esteem, unmixed admiration, a regard the most tender and undiminished always expressed under every circumstance, be not presumptuous at least of that sort of conduct which constitutes kindness in a husband, I know not what evidence is to be heard in favour of any man in similar circumstances.

"You, of course, would feel no consolation in thinking, whatever your friends might, that the whole weight of blame would rest upon one whom you have so loved, and whom, if I do not mistake you much, you still so love ; and yet this is the



1816. very lightest of the evils that must arise from a formal separation between you and your husband. What pleasure Lady Byron could have in thinking that by an act of hers, supposing it to be ever so just, she has stamped the indelible disgrace of having ill-treated the most admirable of her sex upon a man of whom she was once so fond, I am entirely at a loss to divine. Had you all the cause for complaint which is assumed by your friends, but which I know you do not assume, is it possible that you could wish to come at once to that step which is generally the last instead of the first resource, and by so doing (allowing yourself to be entirely secure from all imputation) irrevocably injure the character of Lord Byron—of him against whom your sole charge is that you love him more than he loves you—to prove which excess of affection on your side you contribute to his complete ruin? The supposition will not bear a second inquiry. State, however, the case simply, as it will be stated by the world. Lord and Lady Byron married in January 1815, they separated in February 1816. Was it ever heard that they quarrelled during their marriage? No: on the contrary, the most intimate friends of Lord Byron always at least gave out that he was very happy in his wife, for which they stated his own authority; and his nearest relation who lived in the house with them constantly expressed the same opinion as coming not only from her brother but the lady herself.

“What, then, was the cause, and who proposed the separation? Lady Byron’s family.

“On what grounds? Her family say that he ill-treated his wife, that he talked of going abroad, and of living in London as a single man.

“Did his wife say that she was ill-treated

whilst she lived with him? Not as has been heard. 1816.

“Did he go abroad, or did he live in London as a single man? He could not do both? No, he did not.

“Then it is meant to be said, that his wife would not live any longer with him, because he talked of going abroad or living in lodgings without her: in other words, she was determined to strike the first blow, and leave him for fear he should leave her. A spirited lady, indeed, but one who could have cared but very little about Lord Byron.

“But what was his ill-treatment of her? Did he ever leave her? No; they lived together as man and wife up to the last day. Did Lady Byron ever complain of any personal neglect, any preference for another? Never; Lord Byron was never absent from her excepting once for three days, and during her confinement.

“What, then, is he charged with? Why, he got up late, dined alone, was generally out of spirits, and occasionally out of humour.

“Did his ill-humour discharge itself against his wife, except in being more silent than some husbands, and in refusing to be introduced amongst her friends? It is not mentioned that it did.

“Had he any excuse for the same ill-humours? Some little; he has had from two to four executions in his house at a time, and has had, and now has, a complaint of a very dangerous tendency.

“A third person might here interpose, and inquire whether it is Lord Byron’s usual practice to quarrel with his associates. The answer to which would be that those who have known him longest like him best, and that he has a power of making

1816. and retaining attachments perhaps never met with in any other person. The conclusion, then, from these questions would be, that her Ladyship left her husband because she persuaded herself she could not be happy with him, and took that resolution so suddenly as to leave it in doubt whether she did not listen to the advice of others rather than to the suggestions of her own heart. And it would be observable, that it is usual to wait more than a year before having recourse to matrimonial separation upon such grounds as mere difference of taste, or even a little impatience of expression in either or both parties.

“Here ends my dialogue, which, as it is that which must arise from the simple statement of what your Ladyship knows to be true, is, I think, a fair representation of what ought, at least, to be said on the event now so fatally in prospect; and what certainly will be said by no small portion of those who will ever discuss the question.

“If I could for an instant suppose that you did not love my friend as much as when we parted at Seaham, I should spare you all I have written; for I should then conclude the whole proceeding to be only a decent way of breaking up your alliance with your husband, and, according to the laudable custom of the world, leaving all advantage of the separation to one party, and all the odium of it to the other. It is not possible, after reading your letter of the 16th of January last, only a fortnight before the announced separation, to entertain such a suspicion; and all I have said is merely directed to show you how entirely those who have persuaded, from a zeal no doubt for your happiness, such an extreme measure have grounded their conclusion on premises altogether false and untenable. Condescend, then, my dear



Lady Byron, to write to me only one line, stating that you are coming up to London, or are expecting Lord Byron, and ready to receive him at Kirkby. One of these two steps is absolutely necessary to form an explicit negative to the story, which, I am sorry to say, has been given every chance of being put into immediate circulation; and unless I am the most deceived man living, you will adopt the only means of bringing at once the report into absolute discredit. 1816.

“Most truly your Ladyship’s faithful sert.,

“JOHN HOBHOUSE.”

In the last paragraph of the letter Mr. Hobhouse alluded to the report of the separation having taken place, which had been spread by persons who could have their story only from the Noel family; for not a word of the announced intention had ever transpired from the lips of Lord Byron’s family or friends. A letter written from a young lady at Kirkby to a friend in London did in fact do all that could be done to give publicity to the transaction. Mr. T. Noel likewise mentioned that the separation was about to take place, and his intelligence, either directly or indirectly, must be dated from the same place. It may be conjectured that those who insisted on the measure had an object in giving publicity to it, as it would then be less easy for Lady Byron to retract; but it must be allowed that this was not treating Lord Byron with the common forms of decency and circumspection, but was, in fact, giving him every disadvantage which could

1816. result from a public investigation of his conduct. It confirmed the suspicion of his Lordship's friends, that the object of those from whom the proposal originated was to *frighten* him into submission as the only means of silencing those detestable calumnies to which the statement of the mere case that Lady Byron had fled to her father's house for protection was sure to give rise, but which were in fact the principal cause of their positive advice against, and his Lordship's disinclination to, any private arrangement. Had Lady Byron herself, in the first instance, written to Lord Byron, and proposed a separation on such grounds as she might have thought herself justified in *privately* adducing, the case would have been very different, and there is every reason to believe that the whole affair would, either in one way or the other, have been at once satisfactorily arranged.

Unfortunately, however, her Ladyship, *labouring under some delusion respecting Lord Byron's feelings and sentiments*, seems to have consulted the one as little she was able to deal with the other. Her operations commenced, continued, and concluded in hostility, and were conducted with a decision and address justified by the usages of "a war more than civil," but not commonly adopted by the parties in a dissension, which should end the moment it began by the accomplishing of its object, namely, a separation, proposed in the usual forms by one of the parties

concerned, and not by any third person. That 1816.  
this is no harsh judgment will be acknowledged  
by the detail of the correspondence, to which  
we return.

Lord Byron had agreed to give the earliest  
information to Mr. Hobhouse of any answer he  
might receive from Lady Byron; and Mr. H., not  
hearing from him for two days, had still consider-  
able hopes that he might hear of Lady Byron's  
arrival in London, instead of any confirmation of  
Sir R. Noel's proposition. On Thursday, Feb-  
ruary 8, Mr. Hobhouse sent a messenger to  
London to inquire after his Lordship's health, and  
to mention that he should arrive in London the  
next day. A short note from Lord Byron in-  
formed his friend for the first time that Lady  
Byron *was* a party to the proposal of her  
father :

"February 8, 1816.

"DEAR H.,—

"I shall be very glad to see you, but it  
is all in vain, and all over. She has written  
two letters—one to Mrs. L., and since, a second  
to me—quite decisive of her determination on  
the subject. However, let me see you. I mean  
to go abroad the moment packages will permit.  
'There is a world beyond Rome.'

"Ever yours,

"B."

Those who are acquainted either with the  
style in writing or conversation of Lord Byron  
will recognise in this note something very different



1816. from either, and altogether expressive, short as it is, of that deep distress which it is as inhuman not to feel, as it is unmanly to encourage and portray, in the ravings of grief or despair.

On the Friday morning Mr. Hobhouse received from Lady Byron the following letter corroborative of the information before conveyed from Lord Byron :

“DEAR SIR,—

“Your zeal in Lord Byron’s cause does not need an excuse to me. You must be ignorant of the long series of circumstances which have necessitated this afflicting step. If *my* determination were not founded on such grounds as made it irrevocable, its adoption would be perfectly inexcusable. I must therefore decline your visit and all discussion on this subject, though obliged by the friendly intention expressed in your offer.

“I remain your very obedient sert.,

“A. I. BYRON.

“To JOHN C. HOBHOUSE, Esq.

“KIRKBY, *February* 7, 1816.”

Here her Ladyship alludes only to Mr. Hobhouse’s note written from Piccadilly, for she had not received his letter dated Whitton Park; and when she makes use of the terms “zeal in Lord Byron’s cause,” shows that she mistook, what was nothing more than a supplication that she would consider her own happiness as well as that of her husband, for the advocating of a “*cause*.” Lord Byron had no “*cause*” when

MR. H. wrote, and no other zeal was shown than 1816.  
an ardent wish to *prevent a separation*, which involved Lady Byron's "*cause*" as much as—some will think more than—it did that of Lord Byron. But in this instance also it may be permitted to say that her Ladyship had formed an incorrect judgment not only of his Lordship, but of his Lordship's friends, who, from not exactly bearing that cast of character which she might have been accustomed to regard as necessary for the communion of married men, she was induced to look upon as the associates of wickedness, rather than as the votaries and encouragers of a steady and honourable attachment to the companion of many years. She was unwilling to believe that any principle could be found in men *not* belonging to a certain school; and more especially in those belonging to that pernicious persuasion of which she unfortunately fancied that her husband was the very Coryphæus, founding her opinions upon sundry playful paradoxes, of which *a total inapprehension of irony and of humour* of any kind prevented her from appreciating the true value. It is true that Lord Byron, upon discovering that his new companion did not understand him so entirely as his old friends, should have desisted from those extravagancies of expression and manner, which, although they might be enjoyed by those who well knew from long experience whence they began and where they would end, were yet totally un-

1816. intelligible to his wife, and were set down to the account of a depraved mind rejoicing in the contemplation of every enormity.

In the same humour Lord Byron was in the habit of backing the most singular of his assertions by citing the authority, and, it is probable, even the example, of his friends; who therefore might well be regarded by one who took everything in sober sadness, for a set of social Machiavels, awed by no fear, and governed by no motives not connected with the accomplishing of their immediate ends.

It may be no presumption to say that her Ladyship mistook Lord Byron's friends as much at least as she mistook Lord Byron, and that when she indulged herself in reflections, as was not unfrequently the case, so it now seems, prejudicial to their characters as men of principle, she forgot that the pale of virtue may be too much circumscribed by ignorance, prejudice, and want of charity, as well as it may receive too great a latitude from vicious indulgence or indifference.

Had Lady Byron condescended to state to either of Lord Byron's intimate associates the general outline of her grievances, or even her resolutions respecting a separation, she would have secured her object without any of those difficulties which were thrown in her way by the violent proceedings of her family and friends. But this measure would not have coincided with the resolution taken *to impress*



*upon the world that his Lordship was a monster,* 1816.  
and that everything and everybody connected with him, if not the object of horror, should, at least, be regarded with suspicion and distrust. Her Ladyship therefore should not be surprised if those who, in consequence of her misapprehensions and the measures of her friends, now find themselves for the first time in their lives the subjects of obloquy and animadversion, should endeavour, at least, to defend themselves, and be but little careful whether that defence should involve a charge against the origin and promoters of such an unjust aggression.

It will be easily believed that Mr. Hobhouse did not, after receiving the letter from Lady Byron, venture on his proposed visit to Kirkby, which, if it had taken place, would not have been prompted more by a "zeal in Lord Byron's cause" than by a wish to prevent Lady Byron from taking a step which he thought must be subversive of all her future happiness. He received no answer to his subsequent letter, nor obtained any other notice respecting its reception at Kirkby, except that it had been forwarded to Dr. Lushington, a civilian employed by the Noel family in the "cause" of Lady Byron *versus* Lord Byron. On hearing this intelligence, Mr. Hobhouse was no longer at a loss to account for the use of the word "cause" in her Ladyship's letter. He found, indeed, that Dr. Lushington had been consulted and intrusted with

1816. the merits of the "*cause*" some fifteen days before Lord Byron had received the least intimation that the question of his honour and happiness had been put into a lawyer's hands; and that it depended upon the judgment of a lawyer of Doctors' Commons whether he was yet ripe enough to be plucked out of his place in society, or whether more decided proofs were wanting to insure his discomfiture and disgrace.

The letters of which Lord Byron talks in his note to Mr. Hobhouse were as follows—and decisive enough, it must be owned, they were:

└ "MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,—

"You are desired by your brother to ask if my father has acted with my concurrence in proposing a separation. He has. It cannot be supposed that in my present distressing situation, I am capable of stating in a detailed manner the reasons which not only justify this measure, but compel me to take it; and it never can be my wish to remember *unnecessarily* those injuries for which, however deep, I feel no resentment. I will now only recall to Lord Byron's mind, his avowed and insurmountable aversion to the marriage state, and the desire and determination he has expressed ever since its commencement to free himself from that bondage, as finding it quite insupportable—though candidly acknowledging that no effort of duty or affection has been wanting on my part. He has too painfully convinced me that all those attempts to contribute towards his happiness were wholly useless, and most unwelcome to him.

"I enclose this letter to my father, wishing it to receive his sanction. 1816.

"Ever yours most affectionately,

"A. I. BYRON.

"KIRKBY MALLORY,

"February 3, 1816."

Accompanying this letter to Mrs. Leigh a note was also sent to her :

"I hope, my dear A., that you would on no account withhold from your brother the letter which I sent yesterday in answer to yours written by his desire—particularly as one which I have received from himself to-day renders it still more important that he should know the contents of that addressed to you. I am in haste, and not very well.

"Yours most affly.,

"A. I. BYRON.

"February 4, 1816."

The letter to Lord Byron, exactly the next which he received after the letter of January 16 addressing him as her "dearest duck," was conceived in the following terms :

"If I had not written to Mrs. Leigh what I deemed a sufficient answer to the contents of your first letter, I should not have deferred the still more painful task of addressing yourself. Your second letter, received yesterday, seems to require from me this exertion. I am surprised at the manner in which that letter was delivered to me, since my correspondence, like my determination, is free. I have indeed placed myself under the protection of my parents, but I act on



1816. my own conviction independently, as they do on theirs.

"You know what I have suffered, and would have sacrificed, to avoid this extremity—and the strong proofs of duty and attachment I have given by a persevering endurance of the most trying inflictions.

"After seriously and dispassionately reviewing the misery that I have experienced almost without an interval from the day of my marriage, I have finally determined on the measure of a separation, which my father was authorised to communicate to you and to carry into effect. It is unhappily your disposition to consider what you *have* as worthless—what you have *lost* as invaluable. But remember that you believed yourself most miserable when I was yours.

"Every expression of feeling, sincerely as it might be made, would here be misplaced.

"ANNE ISABELLA BYRON.

"To LORD BYRON.

"KIRKBY,

"February 7, 1816."

Her Ladyship, fearful lest she should appear to have delayed any longer than necessary this desperate step, took care to put upon the cover of the letter "*By Express.*" There may be some who prefer the awful solemnity, and honest, open self-commendation of this last epistle, to the playful familiarity of that addressed to Lady Byron's "dearest duck"; but without weighing their respective merits, it may be fairly said, it is almost impossible to believe they are both written by the same person, and that the "Pippin

—Pip—ip ” of one letter is the “ Anne Isabella Byron ” of the other. 1816.

Immediately on the receipt of Lady Byron's letter to Mrs. Leigh, Lord Byron wrote the following letter to Sir Ralph Noel :

“ *February 7, 1816.*

“ SIR,—

“ I have read Lady Byron's letter, inclosed by you to Mrs. Leigh, with much surprise and more sorrow. Lady B. left London without a single hint of such feelings or intentions—neither did they transpire in her letters on the road, nor subsequent to her arrival at Kirkby. In these letters Lady Byron expresses herself to me with that playful confidence and affectionate liveliness which is perhaps a greater proof of attachment than more serious professions ; she speaks to her husband of his child, like a wife and a mother. I am therefore reduced to the melancholy alternative of either believing her capable of a duplicity very foreign to my opinion of her character, or that she has lately sunk under influence, the admission of which, however respected and respectable heretofore, is not recognised in her vows at the altar.

“ My house, while I have one, is open to her, and my heart always—even though I should have no other shelter to offer her. I cannot suspect Lady Byron of making the grounds stated the pretext for dissolving our connection with a view to escape from my scattered fortunes ; although the time chosen for this proposition, and the manner in which it was made—without inquiry, without appeal, without even a doubt, or an attempt at reconciliation—might almost excuse such a supposition. If I address you in

1813. strong language, Sir, I still wish to temper it with that respect which is required by the very duties you would persuade me to abandon, and request your candid interpretation of such expressions as circumstances have compelled me to use. I may not debase myself to implore as a suppliant the restoration of a reluctant wife, but I will not compromise my rights as a husband and as a father; I invite Lady Byron's return—I am ready to go to her should she desire or require it—and I deprecate all attempts which have been made or may be made to part us.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,

“With great respect,

“Your most obed. and very humble servant,

“BYRON.

“To SIR R. NOEL, BART.”

Before we proceed to give a copy of the letter written by Lord Byron to Lady Byron, it may be necessary to allude to that letter written on the road by her Ladyship to her husband, of which Lord Byron speaks in the foregoing epistle. This letter was dated from Woburn, and written on the day that her Ladyship left Piccadilly. The style was similar to that of the letter of January 16, and Lord Byron may indeed most fairly say that it did not convey the “least hint of her feelings and intentions.” It ran thus :

“WOBURN.

“DEAREST B.,—

“We arrived here safely—the child is the best of travellers. Now do leave off the abominable trade of versifying, and brandy, everything that is nau——”



This letter is lost, so that the remaining words, 1816.  
which were exactly in the same strain, are not  
given: those above are the exact expressions  
used by her Ladyship, and do certainly bespeak  
the "playful confidence" which Lord Byron  
tells Sir R. Noel was so apparent in her Lady-  
ship's letters written after she left him. The  
world may possibly not have quite the same  
opinion as to the abominable trade of versifying,  
carried on as it was by his Lordship, as Lady  
Byron, nor class the composition of "Childe  
Harold" and the "Corsair" with "drinking  
brandy" and everything that is "*nau*" ghty;  
but in justice to her Ladyship, it should be  
mentioned that she had seen, from experience,  
that the periods in which her husband was  
bargaining with the Muses for their poetical  
commodities were those in which his health and  
temperament seemed more painfully affected than  
at other intervals.

The following page contains Lord Byron's  
answer to Lady Byron's letter of February 7:

"February 8, 1816.

"All I can say seems useless—and all I could  
say might be no less unavailing—yet I still  
cling to the wreck of my hopes, before they  
sink for ever. Were you, then, *never* happy  
with me? Did you never at any time or times  
express yourself so? Have no marks of affection  
of the warmest and most reciprocal attachment  
passed between us? or did in fact hardly a day

1816. go down without some such on one side, and generally on both? Do not mistake me: I have not denied my state of mind—but you know its causes—and were those deviations from calmness never followed by acknowledgments and repentance? Was not the last that recurred more particularly so? and had I not—had we not the days before and on the day we parted—every reason to believe that we loved each other? that we were to meet again? Were not your letters kind? Had I not acknowledged to you all my faults and follies—and assured you that some had not and could not be repeated? I do not require these questions to be answered to me, but to your own heart. The day before I received your father's letter I had fixed a day for rejoining you. If I did not write lately, Augusta did; and as you had been my proxy in correspondence with her, so did I imagine she might be the same from me to you.

“Upon your letter to me this day I surely may remark that its expressions imply a treatment which I am incapable of inflicting, and you of imputing to me, if aware of their latitude, and the extent of the inference to be drawn from them. This is not just, but I have no reproaches nor the wish to find cause for them. Will you see me?—when and where you please—in whose presence you please. The interview shall pledge you to nothing, and I will say and do nothing to agitate either. It is torture to correspond thus, and there are things to be settled and said which cannot be written.

“You say it is my disposition to deem what I have worthless. Did I deem *you* so? Did I ever so express myself to you, or of you to others? You are much changed within these twenty days or you would never have thus

poisoned your own better feelings and trampled on mine. 1816.

“Ever your most truly and affectly.”

It may be useless to add anything to this candid, this feeling remonstrance, except to remark, perhaps, that Lady Byron, in making a charge in her letter against her husband for having taken a precaution against the non-delivery of his letters, evinced at once the original spring of her present conduct. But it was not for Lord Byron to recriminate upon his wife with the imputation of acting solely from feelings of *wounded pride*. Lady Byron shows that she could not for an instant bear that any one should think she was not left solely to her own free will and free agency. Hence her expression—“I am surprised at the manner in which that letter was delivered to me,” an expression which surely might have been spared, but which showed the unfortunate perverseness of vision with which every measure of his Lordship’s was now to be regarded.

It will be seen how this offer of a meeting was received by Lady Byron, but previously it may be right to give the answer of Sir Ralph Noel to Lord Byron’s letter of February 7 :

“MIVART’S HOTEL, *February 8, 1816.*

“MY LORD,—

“Before I made any reply to your last letter, I should have deemed it necessary to have



1816. forwarded it to Lady Byron had I not been informed by her that she had already received two letters from you, and, after the maturest deliberation, persevered in the resolution of never returning to your house. This determination I understand her to have conveyed to your Lordship in the most explicit terms. There cannot, therefore, any longer exist a doubt on your mind that the course I have hitherto adopted receives her full sanction, and that it is incumbent upon me to persevere by all amicable means—and by legal measures, if necessary—until a final separation is effected.

“I trust, therefore, your Lordship will no longer hesitate, but immediately authorise some gentleman to assist in completing the necessary arrangements.

“I remain, my Lord,  
 “Your Lordship’s faithful servt.,  
 “RA: NOEL.”

The reply made by Lady Byron to her husband’s letter of the 8th was as follows :

“I have determined, *if possible*, not to indulge the language of feeling in addressing you, as it could only be injurious in our present relative situations. I wish that you had spared *me* by a similar conduct. By means of our authorised friends those points which require conversational discussion can be settled, and, whatever may now appear to you inconsistent, satisfactorily explained.

“A. I. BYRON.

“To LORD BYRON,

“KIRKBY,

“February 11, 1816,”

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Lord Byron was totally at a loss to understand the bearing of the first paragraph in this letter; and it must be confessed that it is not very clear whether it was written in sorrow or anger. The most prominent of the obscure meanings which it presents is: that her Ladyship will not write affectionately to her husband, and wishes her husband had not written affectionately to her; but how the forbearing to write with her former fondness was *sparing* him, or how his having owned that he loved her—that he had not always been sufficiently kind to her—that he begged pardon for his misconduct—and that he entreated to see her and repeat his contrition—was *not sparing* her, we may well be at a loss to understand. 1816.

We repeat, Lady Byron knew nothing of Lord Byron. She expected a strong, perhaps a violent letter. She was prepared for such a one, and for such a one only. That which did arrive gave her a pain which she did not expect, and which she was the least capable to bear—the pain of finding she had been mistaken, and that in a point which was to decide her condition and her comfort for ever. Had she received the reply which she expected, she would have had to show some justification for the abruptness of her resolution. The supplication, the tenderness of him whom she declared to be without remorse and without feeling, left her without an excuse—to her own mind—and leaves her so still, in spite

1816. of all the encouragement of her friends and the self-congratulation of conscious perseverance.

Let any one reperuse Lord Byron's letter and her answer; was it fitting—was it decent—to make such a reply? However, those who are not content with the doubtful phrase of this letter of the 11th may examine a second communication which her Ladyship sent to Lord Byron two days subsequently to that date, and which afforded his Lordship a clue, in some measure, to that conduct which had hitherto appeared so inexplicable:

“On reconsidering your last letter to me, and your second to my father, I find some allusions which I will not leave to be answered by others, because the explanation may be less disagreeable to you from myself.

“My letters of January 15 and 16.

“It can be fully and clearly proved that I left your house under the persuasion of your having a complaint of so dangerous a nature that any agitation might bring on a fatal crisis. My entreaties before I quitted you, that you would take medical advice, repeated in my letter of January 15, must convince you of such an impression on my mind. My absence, if it had not been rendered necessary by other causes, was *medically* recommended on that ground, as removing an object of irritation. I should have acted inconsistently with my unchanged affection for you, or indeed with the common principles of humanity, by urging my wrongs at that moment. From subsequent accounts I found that these particular apprehensions which I and others had entertained were groundless. Till they were



1816.

ascertained to be so, it was my wish and intention to induce you to come to this place, where at every hazard I would have devoted myself to the alleviation of *your* sufferings, and should not then have reminded you of *my own*, as believing you, from physical causes, not to be *accountable* for them. My parents, under the same impression communicated by me, felt the kindest anxiety to promote my wishes and your recovery, by receiving you here. Of all this my letter of January 16 is a testimony.

“If for these reasons (to which others were perhaps added) I did not remonstrate at the time of leaving your house, you cannot forget that I had before warned you, earnestly and affectionately, of the unhappy and irreparable consequences which must ensue from your conduct, both to yourself and me. That to those representations you had replied by a determination to be wicked, though it should break my heart. What, then, had I to expect? I cannot attribute your ‘state of mind’ to any cause so much as to that *total* dereliction of principle, which *since* our marriage you have professed and gloried in. Your acknowledgments have not been accompanied by any intentions of amendment.

“I have *consistently* fulfilled my duty as your wife; it was too dear to be resigned till it became hopeless. Now my resolution cannot be changed.

“A. I. BYRON.

“To LORD BYRON,

“KIRKBY,

“February 13, 1816.”

The reader is desired to consider this letter attentively—*attentively*, as it contains the “*only*

1816. *specified charge*” ever made against Lord Byron by his wife, and must give further matter for consideration how far any allegations from this quarter are to be received, as altogether undeniable and productive of immediate conviction. What, in fact, is the substance of this letter?

Lady Byron opens with saying “that she wishes to explain those allusions to her *former* conduct and correspondence which Lord Byron opposed in observation upon her *present* conduct and correspondence.” The first thing, then, to be accounted for was the two letters; how is this done? By informing Lord Byron neither more nor less than that her Ladyship, when she wrote them, “*thought him mad*”; and thinking that “*any agitation might bring on a fatal crisis*,” she applied that style to him, which she thought would produce no agitation.

Her absence, she says, was “*medically recommended*.” This gets rid at once of Sir Ralph Noel’s charge of dismissal from Lord Byron’s house, made in his first letter to his Lordship. “From subsequent accounts” she found that she had been wrong in thinking Lord Byron mad, and from that instant changed her wishes and resolutions. Whilst she thought him mad, she wished him to travel to Kirkby and to take care of him there, in conjunction with her father and mother, who also thought him mad “from the communication of her Ladyship’s impressions,” and who would have administered to his *comfort*,

though not, it seems, to his *cure*, for the moment it is found that his Lordship is *not* mad, both his wife and her parents resolve to break off all connection with him. 1816

Sir R. Noel's *jocose* letter alluded to in Lady Byron's note of the 16th was then probably to be written with the same charitable purpose of preventing a "fatal crisis," and certainly neither humour nor good humour was ever so well employed.

Lady Byron having stated that she once thought her husband mad, had then changed her opinion, and that previously to this change she and her parents were eager to see him at Kirkby, says, "Of all this my letter of January 16 is a testimony." We beg anybody to look at this letter again, beginning with "dearest duck" and ending with "Pippin—Pip—ip," and then say if he can, for the soul of him, make such a deduction. The truth is, that for the sake of Lady Byron, we will not make another comment on what she calls an "explanation" of this letter.

Lady Byron, on discovering that Lord Byron was *not* mad, came to the conclusion that he *was wicked*, so entirely and irrevocably as to make it impossible that she should live with him any longer.

The words "wrongs," "sufferings," and "conduct" in her Ladyship's letter must be thought, of course, to refer to some actual deeds of a flagitious nature; or at least so injurious to Lady



1816. Byron's peace as to justify her proceedings. But the alarm thrown upon the minds of Lord Byron's friends at the perusal of such words as applicable to his behaviour, has been very much diminished by the family of her Ladyship and her legal advisers remaining silent as to any particular facts, and never having given the least explanation respecting the individual conduct to which her Ladyship here seems to allude.

Fortunately, also, they thought themselves able to discover some cause, not so prejudicial to Lord Byron's character, for such vague assertions, in that very singular phrase in which the specified delinquency is at once reduced to "*a determination to be wicked*," expressed by *words* to Lady Byron, and to "*a* PROFESSED *dereliction of principle*" to which her Ladyship at last "attributed that state of mind" which, in the first instance, and for some time, she owns she had mistaken for *madness*. It was, however, possible that her Ladyship, having made one mistake, might make another: and it does appear that having always looked at her husband's conduct with reference to a particular system of her own, which she was obliged afterwards to confess *was erroneous*, she may not be admitted as the fairest judge and most candid interpreter of his actions or of *his words*, to which, indeed, she seems to have directed her principal attention.

It is no harshness of feeling or phrase to assert that the woman who should have been sufficiently

indiscreet and ill-judging to give rise to, to encourage or even continue, any conversation in which her husband should have an opportunity, either seriously or in jest, of repeatedly resorting to such expressions as those marked above, should not be considered as admissible testimony in any cause finally decisive of the character to be given to moral conduct. Also, it may be as positively pronounced, that she who would charge as a crime, upon her husband, declarations forced perhaps from him in a moment of opposition, anger, or paradox, may be excused, it is possible, on account of the weakness and suspicion natural to her sex, and to be expected from her inexperience; but it is totally unfit to decide upon the merits of her own case, or the measure of her imagined injuries. It is not easy to picture to oneself a situation so inextricably wretched as that of the man subject to a domestic inquisition, which by the perpetual *question* either of kindness or remonstrance, should drive him to exaggerated confessions pronounced chiefly for the purpose of confounding the inquirer and for the sake of temporary repose. Neither affection nor fear can justify the application of such conversation as may draw a man into the topics and self-accusations alluded to by Lady Byron.

Her Ladyship, however, may not have been agitated either by affection or fear. She was only looking about for symptoms answerable to that case which she contemplated, and to which

1816. she expected that his Lordship's conduct would  
[altogether conform. Being persuaded that her husband was insane, his actions and words were all weighed as more or less indicative of his distemper—and not only his *actions* and *his words*, but also *his papers*, and *his books*, were scrutinised with the same apprehension, and for the same end. Her Ladyship thought she was only doing her duty in investigating *him* and *his* in search of those singularities and obliquities, which she conceived were the proofs and features of that particular insanity under which he laboured. His *drawers* and *trunks*, and *letter-cases*, were the objects of research—in one place, which his Lordship certainly did not intend for the inspection even of his wife, was found a small bottle of laudanum—and in the same place a few volumes of a work which as a curiosity might be kept, but which was certainly not fit for an open library—*therefore* had it been concealed by Lord Byron. The discovery of that and the laudanum furnished an important symptom. Her Ladyship had provided herself with a volume of the *Medical Journal* in which she thought a case described of *hydrocephalus* designated the peculiar malady so exactly, that she marked the most prominent and apposite features on the margin with a pencil. Her medical attendant, Mr. Le Mann, who had sent her the book, was consulted on this occasion, and notwithstanding he had entertained apprehensions from the disordered



state of his Lordship's liver—that his brain might be partially affected unless the disease was speedily removed—yet he declined giving any decided opinion, or stating those apprehensions to his Lordship. Lady Byron in this emergency, remarking Lord Byron on one hand and perusing carefully the *Medical Journal* on the other, determined to *state her husband's case* to Dr. Baillie. The Doctor was invited to an audience with her Ladyship in Piccadilly, and Lady Byron employed the interval before his visit in drawing up, on a large sheet of paper, a statement of Lord Byron's conduct, including *his sayings* and singularities of manner and look. Dr. Baillie did come to Lord Byron's own house, and in Lord Byron's own parlour did examine these medical charges preferred against Lord Byron by Lord Byron's own wife ; his Lordship being perhaps in the next room, and being certainly altogether ignorant that any such investigation was on foot. Mr. Le Mann was present during the whole interview, with the exception of two or three minutes, and when he returned, found that Dr. Baillie also declined giving a decided opinion : but said, “that if Lady Byron apprehended any violence—the usual medical assistance should be in readiness and at hand,” meaning, it is to be presumed, that some of Dr. Willis's attendants and their customary implements might be employed to advantage in seconding her Ladyship. What Lady Byron did with her paper is not known, but it may be reasonably conjectured

1816.

1816. that the statement, when found not altogether decisive for the interference of a Doctor of Medicine, was handed over to a Doctor of the Commons; and that Dr. Lushington's present brief is composed of the items which Dr. Baillie found to be not quite so satisfactory as might be wished. One fact is certain, that Dr. Lushington, as well as Dr. Baillie, had been consulted *before* Lord Byron had received the least intimation of the affair—and that he as little guessed there was a chance of his being put into the Ecclesiastical Courts as into a strait-waistcoat—and yet he was at one time almost as near the one as the other catastrophe.

Lady Byron, in pursuance of her inquiry, thought proper also to request an interview of Mr. Hanson, his Lordship's solicitor, and had a meeting with that gentleman at his own house. At that meeting she stated her apprehensions, and stated them so strongly that Mr. Hanson *actually thought it possible* her Ladyship might have a design of *resorting to personal restraint*. Consequently he took the liberty of warning her most seriously against such a desperate and, as he thought, mistaken measure, which might produce even the very mischief which she dreaded, or perhaps a more terrible catastrophe. Lady Byron mentioned to Mr. Hanson many particulars on which she had founded her opinion, and showed him at the same time her *marked* volume of the *Medical Journal* on which Mr. H. could not

help remarking that he could account for all his Lordship's eccentricities in a more simple manner than by supposing him afflicted with hydrocephalus. 1316.

Lady Byron told Mr. Hanson the story of the laudanum bottle, which, Mr. H. remarked, he understood his Lordship had for many years carried about him. She mentioned his practice of keeping loaded pistols in his bedroom ; to which Mr. Hanson replied that Lord Byron from his childhood had been exceedingly apprehensive at night ; that it had been his practice from that period upwards to examine his room carefully before he went to bed, to order his servant to look under the bed ; and that once he was in the habit of having a ladder of ropes in his room, fearing the chance of fire. Lady Byron mentioned several of Lord Byron's strong expressions, and was otherwise so detailed on this subject that Mr. Hanson thought it his duty to ask her " what were her actual apprehensions, and *whether she laboured under any personal fear for herself?* " To which Lady Byron answered, without the least hesitation, "*Oh no, not in the least ; my eye can always put down his ! ! !*" and then added that her suspicions were that Lord Byron might make an attempt upon his own life.

Mr. Hanson, who has known Lord Byron and had him in his family since he was eleven years of age, told Lady Byron that in all that close intimacy he had never seen the least sign of insanity ; that his Lordship was liable to irritation,



1816 and, perhaps, sudden bursts of violence and passion; that he had long been in the habit of indulging in a conversation which was not to be taken "*to the letter*"; and that during his late great pecuniary embarrassments and his ill-health he might have suffered himself to commit and speak extravagances, of which his return to comfort and good health would probably prevent the recurrence. He repeated his deprecation of all violent measures, and her Ladyship left him apparently more satisfied than she had entered his house. At parting she begged Mr. Hanson to use his efforts to induce Lord Byron to follow her as soon as possible to Kirkby, and on getting into her carriage said, "If I am wanted in London, pray let me know; I will come down at a minute's warning," alluding to the chance of Lord Byron's increasing malady requiring her presence in Piccadilly.

This interview happened a few days before Lady Byron left London for Kirkby, and it should be mentioned that Mr. Hanson made no communication of it to Lord Byron at the time, nor afterwards directly to himself, thinking that if his evidence should be called for in a court of justice, it would be of importance that the said evidence should not have been previously made known to his Lordship. It would have been decisive against the charge of personal violence which her Ladyship's friends thought proper to add to the catalogue of her husband's offences against her,

or at least would have proved that Lady Byron was capable of saying one thing at one time and another at another. It need not be added that Lord Byron was totally unconscious of the conflict between his eye and that of Lady Byron, although he had recollected being occasionally much annoyed, on lifting up his head, to observe his wife gazing at him with a mixture of pity and anxiety.

We must own that Lady Byron did then think Lord Byron insane, and we must believe her when she says that she left London under that impression. What induced her to change her opinion cannot be known to Lord Byron's friends. Her Ladyship in her letter attributes it to "recent accounts." Mr. Le Mann had every reason to believe that he was the only person (with the exception of Mrs. Leigh) in correspondence with Lady Byron respecting her husband after her departure for Kirkby; and on understanding that her Ladyship said that she founded her determination on some communication from London, conceived that she must allude to him, and therefore wrote to Lady Byron reminding her what had been the real end of his correspondence and the nature of it; which was no other than to persuade her that the state of her husband's health was ameliorating, and that he might soon be able to join her. Mr. Le Mann was very justly fearful of being mistaken for a party to a measure which he disapproved; for if Lady Byron when she left London had enjoined him to make every effort to

1816.

1816. improve the state of her husband's health so as to enable him to join her, he might fairly be surprised that the consequence of his informing her that Lord Byron was actually improving daily, should be a determination on the part of Lady Byron *not* to let him come down to Kirkby.

That Lady Byron should act upon any information of his, could not but give him pain when it had been understood between him and her Ladyship that such information was to be followed not by the *separation*, but the meeting of herself and her husband.

Mr. Le Mann, when Sir R. Noel came to London — notwithstanding what he had before seen of Lady Noel's violence—resolved to use his efforts to prevent a *separation*, and called on Sir Ralph without giving Lord Byron any hint of his proceeding—indeed this was before his Lordship received Sir R. Noel's letter—he used every argument with Sir Ralph to dissuade him from taking so decisive a measure, and at one time he thought Sir Ralph was inclined to adopt his advice, for he hesitated and seemed half-persuaded, but then said “that he must go and *speak to Mrs. Clermont*,” with whom he returned into the room, and then declared “*that it was too late—the step was taken.*”

Let it be observed, in passing, that if Mr. Le Mann, the confidential medical attendant of Lady Byron, who had heard that case which she made out for the inspection of Dr. Baillie, and was



certainly acquainted with more circumstances than 1816.  
could reasonably come to the knowledge of any  
third person, thought the proposed separation so  
unadvisable a step, there is no little folly and  
boldness in those who, pretending to speak from  
information, assert that this measure was not only  
just but indispensable.

On receiving Lady Byron's two letters of the  
11th and 13th, his Lordship was at a loss what  
steps to adopt; but he was still willing to try  
what could be done to conciliate his wife. Accord-  
ingly he directed his sister to write another letter  
repeating the wish and offer of an interview  
according to such terms as Lady Byron might  
herself dictate. He himself also wrote to her  
Ladyship a letter, of which the following is a  
copy :

7  
“*February 15, 1816.*”

“I know not what to say, every step taken  
appears to bear you farther from me, and to widen  
‘the great gulf between thee and me.’ If it cannot  
be crossed I will perish in its depth.

“Two letters have been written by me to you,  
but I have not sent them, and I know not well  
why I write this, or whether I shall send it or no.  
How far your conduct is reconcilable to your  
duties and affections as a wife and a mother, must  
be a question for your own reflection. The trial  
has not been very long—a year, I grant you—of  
distress, distemper, and misfortune; but these fell  
chiefly on me, and bitter as the recollection is to  
me of what I have felt, it is much more so to have  
made you a partner of my desolation. On the

1816. charges to be preferred against me I have *twice* been refused any information by your father and his advisers. It is now a fortnight, which has been passed in suspense, in humiliation, in obloquy, exposed to the most black and blighting calumnies of every kind, without even the power of contradicting conjecture and vulgar assertion as to the accusations, because I am denied the knowledge of all, or any, particulars from the only quarter that can afford them. In the meantime I hope your ears are gratified by the general rumours.

“I have invited your return; it has been refused. I have requested to know with what I am charged; it is refused. Is this mercy or justice? We shall see. And now, Bell, dearest Bell, whatever may be the event of this calamitous difference, whether you are returned to or torn from me, I can only say in the truth of affliction, and without hope, motive, or end in again saying what I have lately but vainly repeated, that I love you, bad or good, mad or rational, miserable or content, I love you, and shall do, to the dregs of my memory and existence. If I can feel thus for you now under every possible aggravation and exasperating circumstance that can corrode the heart and inflame the brain, perhaps you may one day know, or think at least, that I was not all you have persuaded yourself to believe me; but that nothing, nothing can touch me farther.

“I have hitherto avoided naming my child, but this was a feeling you never doubted in me. I must ask of its welfare. I have heard of its beauty and playfulness, and I request, not from you, but through any other channel—Augusta, if you please—some occasional news of its well-being.

“I am, yours, etc.

“B.”

Such is the man who is accused of coldness of heart, of a mind steeled against every bitter feeling, unacquainted with the affections, the dispositions, the sympathies of our nature!!! 1816.

Distressing, indeed, had been the state of Lord Byron during this painful period; balanced between the hope of recovering and the fear of losing his wife; a prey to the alternate passions of pity, regret, love, and indignation; ignorant of the future proceedings of his assailants, and doubtful what ought to be his own; aware that all his measures were so construed as to deprive them of their true meaning and their desired end; exposed on every side to calumnies tending he knew not whither, and directed by he knew not whom; attended by a faithful relative, whose anxieties to soothe and serve him, too kind, too eager to be concealed, augmented rather than alleviated his sorrow; in this depth and gloom of calamity he had need of all the courage of his heart, and of all the elasticity of his genius.

But he could only partially suppress his agitation, which would occasionally break forth in those demonstrations of weakness which in a man, and such a man as Lord Byron, is shocking to the indifferent spectator, but overflows the eye of friendship, and deprives the sufferer of that counsel and support which he then most requires. 7

It was with difficulty that he could be persuaded to take any food more than once in three days. His friends were afraid when they entered his



1816. door lest they should be informed of some dreadful catastrophe having closed all his misfortunes—they never left him without painful presentiments that they had seen him for the last time; not that he indulged in any bursts of passion or any declarations of despair, but his appearance, and the reports of his family, the hours he passed alone in his chamber in agonies which were but too clearly painted in his haggard appearance when he forced himself into the sight of his friends—were sufficient to justify the most alarming apprehensions.

Mrs. Leigh thought it her duty to inform Lady Byron that she could not answer for her brother's life if his wife did not return, or at least did not adopt means less decidedly hostile. She repeated this to Lady Byron when in London; her Ladyship replied, "*she could not help it, she must do her duty,*" an answer which shall be left without remark, except that it is to be presumed, as this representation of Lord Byron tallied neither with the *Medical Journal* nor her Ladyship's Journal, neither with the mad Lord Byron nor the wicked Lord Byron—so all the symptoms were imagined to be fictitious and put on to serve a present purpose. Yet true it is that had Lord Byron not survived that distress, Lady Byron would have been the immediate cause of his death as much as if she had shot him with her own hand.

In order to explain the allusions in Lord

Byron's letter, it must be told that a few days subsequently to the receipt of Sir R. Noel's first letter, Mr. Hanson, Lord Byron's solicitor, called on Sir Ralph in order to obtain some explanation of the conduct of the family, and to learn what were the charges against Lord Byron. He was refused all explanation. Mr. Hanson also had a meeting with Dr. Lushington, of the Commons, her Ladyship's civilian, who also refused any explanation, and said, "*Oh, we are not going to let you in to the forte of our case.*" This, to be sure, was talking like a lawyer, and from a lawyer might be right enough; but a lady confident in the justice of her cause, and the importance of her allegations, and willing to give her husband some chance of seeing to what exposures his being brought into a court would give rise, might certainly be expected to act otherwise. One of the letters which Lord Byron wrote, but did not send, to his wife, made a sort of offer of amicable separation on condition he might be told the charges which were to be made against him; and it is not unlikely that this amicable arrangement would have taken place had it not been for two principal causes, which were, *first*, that he had still reason to think that Lady Byron was so far suffering undue influence that delay might afford her some chance of retracting her resolution—and *secondly*, that certain rumours of the most diabolical nature having been propagated in society, his friends at first, and afterwards his

1816.

1816. family, thought that for his own sake, as well as of all those with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy, it was necessary that the whole affair should undergo a *public investigation*. In reference to the first point the reader may examine the deposition before alluded to, which his Lordship's legal adviser thought right to procure with all due speed. For this purpose, William Fletcher, Lord Byron's valet, wrote to his wife to leave Kirkby for London, a request with which she immediately complied. At the same time a Proctor and three Doctors of the Commons were retained for Lord Byron, and his Lordship desired that Sir Samuel Romilly might be also retained. This desire he repeated in consequence of a visit which he received from a Mr. Davison, Sir R. Noel's agent, who, amongst other things, said that the family had retained Sir Samuel Romilly. Mrs. Fletcher, on arriving in London, was sent to Mr. Hanson, from whom his Lordship then received the following note :

“ MY DEAR LORD,—

“ I have ascertained that Sir Samuel Romilly has had no retainer *offered* him, and find that if he had, he should have rejected it, having a general retainer for you. Whatever, therefore, may have been thrown out on that subject is without foundation, and like many other threats and things.

“ I saw Mrs. Fletcher this morning: her account was very candid and highly favourable to your Lordship, and clearly proves that Lady



Byron is under undue authority. If you have any thoughts of seeing Lady Byron I think you should attempt to do it before any proceedings are commenced. I asked Mrs. Fletcher if she thought her Ladyship would see you, if you called; she said she had no doubt of it, if Mrs. Clermont, that demon, was not there. I am putting Mrs. Fletcher's statement into form, as I think it highly important to your Lordship's vindication. 1816

"Thinking it highly proper to comply with Sir Ralph Noel's application, I sent him, this morning, a copy of the settlement.

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours most faithfully,

"JOHN HANSON."

The deposition of Mrs. Fletcher, which is an exact and detailed representation of what she had said in her letters to her husband, was as follows :

"Ann Fletcher (late Ann Rood), now the wife of William Fletcher, valet to the Right Honourable Lord Byron, Saith : that she has lived in the service of Lady Byron, in the capacity of lady's-maid, since a short time after her Ladyship's marriage, and came up to London with Lord and Lady Byron in the month of March 1815, and resided constantly in the same house with them at their residence, in Piccadilly, from that time till the 15th of January last ; and she never, during that period, observed any difference or disagreement between Lord and Lady Byron, nor did she ever hear Lady Byron complain of any ill-usage from Lord Byron.

"That on the 15th of January last she accompanied Lady Byron, and her child and nurse,

1816. to Kirkby Mallory, in Leicestershire, the seat of Sir Ralph Noel, her Ladyship's father, and travelled in the same carriage with her. That they reached Woburn the first night, and arrived at Kirkby Mallory about six o'clock the next evening.

“That Lady Byron never during the journey made any complaint, or dropt any expression, to lead the deponent to suspect that any disagreement had taken place between her Ladyship and Lord Byron, or that her Ladyship had any intention to separate from his Lordship. That her Ladyship certainly appeared low during her journey, and on her arrival at Kirkby. That, after Lady Byron had been at Kirkby about a week, Lady Noel went up to London, and stayed a week there, and returned to Kirkby on Sunday, the 28th of January. That during this fortnight the deponent constantly attended Lady Byron, and she never said anything to the deponent respecting any disagreement between her and Lord Byron. That her Ladyship was sometimes very low in spirits, and sometimes better. That a week after Lady Noel's return to Kirkby Lady Byron told deponent that her father had written a letter to Lord Byron—she did not particularly mention on what subject, but appeared very low and much distressed at it. That on Tuesday, the 6th of February, Lady Byron observed to the deponent that the letter from her father had not been delivered to Lord Byron, and she said, ‘Rood’ (the name she always called her by), ‘I have still hopes, for the letter has not been delivered’; and her Ladyship seemed in much better spirits, and looked better. On the day she expected the letter would have been delivered to Lord Byron she was extremely distressed, and almost insensible; and on the morning of that day she

asked deponent how soon she could pack up her things to go to town. Deponent told her that she could do it in about half an hour or so. Her Ladyship, however, gave her no directions to do so, but said she would go to town, but was kept against her will, and she expressed a wish that deponent would go and speak to them (meaning Lady Noel and Mrs. Clermont, who had accompanied Lady Noel from town); and the object which Lady Byron wished deponent to speak to them upon was, as she conceived, to let her go away and act from her own will. That in consequence the deponent did immediately go to Mrs. Clermont and told her what a state her lady was in, and desired she (Mrs. Clermont) would go to her and pacify her, as she wanted to go to town. That Mrs. Clermont told deponent not to mind her or pity her, that it was to be expected, and her Ladyship would often be in that low way. That Sir Ralph and Lady Noel were going to interfere. That after this Lady Byron never again mentioned the subject to deponent, which induced deponent to think she had been desired not to mention it to deponent. That deponent was desired one morning by Lady Byron to take a message to Lady Noel; and when she had delivered it, Lady Noel asked her how her lady was. Deponent told her she had had a better night. Lady Noel remarked she looked very thin. Deponent replied, it was owing to her distress of mind. Lady Noel then said, 'You know you told Mrs. Clermont that her Ladyship was in danger of her life while she remained in the house with Lord Byron. You know it was so.' That the deponent immediately denied (as the truth was) that she had ever said such a thing, but told Lady Noel (which was the fact) that it was what Mrs. Clermont

1813.



1816. had said to her, the deponent, and not what the deponent had asserted herself. That Lady Noel was in a great rage with the deponent at this, and repeated, 'You know it was so.' Which this deponent positively denied, for that she scarcely ever saw Lord and Lady Byron together more than once a month, and that she never saw or heard anything unpleasant pass between them.

"And the deponent further saith, that she has frequently heard Lady Byron express herself in terms of great affection for Lord Byron, and has heard her say that if a separation was to take place between them she would be a wretched creature, and never more be happy; and she has also heard Lady Byron say that her father and mother had insisted that there should be a separation, and that she had passed her word to them that she would herself insist on it, but that she had desired her father and mother not to be too hasty; that the deponent then asked her Ladyship if she would not retract it. She replied, 'No; it was impossible.'

(Signed) "ANN FLETCHER.

L "March 8, 1816."

This deposition carries with it an appearance of truth which must not be weakened by the observation of the apparent incongruity with which the latter paragraph may, at the first sight, strike the reader in comparing it with the prior assertion that Lady Byron did not mention the *subject* subsequently to the period of her asking her maid how soon she could prepare for a journey to London. The *subject* to which Mrs. Fletcher evidently alludes is the *going to London*, and not the mere question of her Ladyship's distress,

which might naturally be expected to be sometimes an object of remark, even between the mistress and the maid. 1816.

When William Fletcher wrote to his wife to return to London, Lady Noel, being informed of her intention, was, at the first, as is described in the deposition, exceedingly violent at finding the relation which the lady's-maid and constant attendant of her daughter was likely to give of the intercourse between his Lordship and her mistress. She apprehended for a few minutes that something more substantial than words would be launched at her; but, continuing resolute in her declarations, she found Lady Noel relent, and from motives of policy, as she suspected, was previously to her departure treated with much attention. Lady Noel insisted even upon sending the carriage with her to the town where she got into a public coach, and having a dinner provided at that place. Lady Byron, upon arriving in London, continued also to keep her in her service; and she was in the habit of leaving her husband in Lord Byron's house every morning, in order to dress her Ladyship at Mivart's Hotel, in Lower Brook Street. Her Ladyship was perfectly aware of the nature and tendency of Mrs. Fletcher's evidence, and yet did not dismiss her instantly, which would certainly have been her proceeding if she had believed her guilty of perjury and falsehood in a case so nearly concerning her. It is true that some time in April, Lady Byron

1816. informed Mrs. Fletcher that she had hired another maid two months ago, and should therefore part with her; but even after this maid did arrive, Mrs. Fletcher was employed in dressing her Ladyship's hair, and one day when Mrs. Fletcher took the liberty of saying to her Ladyship that she hoped Lady Byron was not angry with her for what she said, for she knew it was all true, her Ladyship replied, "she was not, and that it was true."

So much for the assertion of Lady Byron in her letter of February 7, "that her correspondence, like her determination, was free," and that she had "*acted on her own conviction independently.*" There is no one who, on reading the deposition of Mrs. Fletcher, and considering the case in all its bearings, but would have come to the conclusion of Lord Byron, that his wife was the victim of undue influence, or at least, of a sense of duty which made her consider her having passed her word to her parents a perpetual, irrefragable obligation. His consenting to a private separation at once would have precluded him from that chance which he still thought might offer itself, of obtaining a reconciliation with Lady Byron.

The other motive, which any man of honour would consider in a still stronger light than the former, was originally suggested by his immediate friends; who, when they heard the most positive



assertions that the cause of the impending separation was an addiction on the part of Lord Byron to vices of the most disgraceful and abominable nature, were obliged to communicate the intelligence, painful as it was, to his Lordship, and to advise the only denial of such charges then in his power, namely, a decided resolution to come to no *private* arrangement, which might compromise his character, by the supposition that he was *afraid* of the disclosures of a public court of law. A recollection of Sir Ralph Noel's two letters will convince any one that one of the objects of the Noel family was to menace his Lordship with legal proceedings. "I am ready to avow to the *public* my reasons," etc., says Sir Ralph in his first letter; and in his second, he directly uses the words "*by legal measures, if necessary.*" Lady Byron herself even went so far as to intimate to Mrs. Leigh that she (Mrs. L.) *would* be one of her evidences *against her brother!!!* and she directed Captain Byron, an inmate in his Lordship's house, to be asked "whether he had any objection to be examined." The previous employment of Dr. Lushington, and, indeed, every other step taken at first by the Noel family, bespeak in the *outset* of the affair a resolution either actually to apply to the law, or to make Lord Byron think they were determined so to do. If, therefore, his Lordship had *at once* complied with Sir Ralph's invitation, the general inference must have been that, being

1816.

1810. threatened with a legal exposure of his conduct, he had been happy to resign his wife, at the first bidding, for the partial preservation of his character.

Instead of such a compromise, his Lordship determined therefore to make preparations for a public defence of his conduct, and the consequence was such as had been foreseen. From the moment that Lord Byron appeared resolved upon publicity, the hints and menaces of the other party were dropped; they sued for private arrangement, left no stone unturned to obtain one: and Lady Byron and her friends talked of the cruelty of dragging her into a public court, although her own father, as has been shown, had been the first person to talk of such a measure. In short, the tables seemed completely turned, and the case being once put in the best position for examination, every day contributed to throw new light upon this measure, the mystery of which alone had been sufficient to terrify the most timid of his Lordship's advisers, but which his acting lawyer was from the first inclined to regard as a scheme, savouring more of a monied than a moral intention, contrived by a portion of Lady Byron's family as the means of obtaining a certain provision for Lady Byron's father, in case of the death of her other respectable parent.

Sir James Bland Burges, a near connection of the family, and trustee of the Wentworth estate, confirmed this suspicion by the communication

of many particulars, and his general impression respecting the present holder of the Noel property. 1813.

In compliance, then, with his own sense of what was due to his character and the advice of his friends, Lord Byron forbore to return any answer to the second letter of Sir Ralph Noel. Some time in the third week in February, Lady Byron arrived in London, and joined her father in Mivart's Hotel. It was then that Mrs. Clermont sent a message, saying that she wished to see Captain Byron, who was then living with Lord Byron. In her conversation with him she used many arguments tending to convince him of the expediency of his relation avoiding a public trial. Amongst other things she said that if the family failed in one court they would go into another; and added, as a dissuasive, that Lord Byron would have all the *costs of suit to pay*!! This woman was doubtless thinking of the arguments likely to prevail with herself, and made her interference more impertinent by the introduction of her own base sentiments of profit and loss, which she presumed might actuate the better portion of mankind. Lord Byron resolved, notwithstanding "these costs of suit," to trust himself to his countrymen; he directed therefore his lawyer to wait upon Sir R. Noel with his positive refusal of a separation. The next day he received the following letter from that gentleman:



1816.

"MY DEAR LORD,—

"As I was about to write a note last night to Sir Ralph Noel to say that I would wait upon him, I received the inclosed note from the Bart. I thought it best to give him your decision in the same way, and I send you a copy of the answer. I thought that the least that was said the better. Their sending for Captain Byron is somewhat singular; it shows, I think, no great confidence or any seriousness of intention to take the measures they have threatened, but a very few days will show. Doctors Robinson, Adams, and Jenner are retained for your Lordship in the Commons, and you have Sir Samuel Romilly under your general retainer, so that you have a multitude of counselors. Mrs. Leigh told me you wished to have Lady Byron's last letter to you, which I now send you. Doubtless your Lordship will see the importance of taking care of all these letters.

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours faith. and obdtly.,

"JOHN HANSON."

The notes inclosed in this letter were as follows :

"Sir Ralph Noel's compliments to Mr. Hanson, and requests he will inform him if Lord Byron has come to any determination upon his proposal for *an amicable separation*. Sir Ralph Noel considers that ample time has now been afforded for full deliberation, and deprecates all further delay as equally painful and injurious to all parties.

"MIVART'S HOTEL, *February 21, 1816.*"

"Mr. Hanson presents his compliments to Sir Ralph Noel, and he has Lord Byron's directions to acquaint Sir Ralph that his Lordship

cannot accede to Sir Ralph Noel's proposal for a separation from Lady Byron. 1816.

"BLOOMSBURY SQUARE,  
"February 21, 1816."

It might have been as well to have previously copied that note from Mr. Hanson which preceded this communication, and to which allusion was before made. Here it is:

"MY DEAR LORD,—

"I have had a long interview with Sir James Bland Burges this morning; it has served to convince me that I have been right in the advice I have given you. There is nothing in the world to fear, and your Lordship may with confidence look to a very early period when the result of all this mysterious trick will develop itself to the chagrin of the contrivers, and will turn the tide of any invective which may now prevail—if it does prevail at all, which I rather doubt. I am decided you should now give a prompt and decisive answer to the proposition which they have dared to make you—but it must be in guarded language; and to-morrow or Sunday I must see you upon it before it goes.

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours ever devotedly,

"JOHN HANSON.

"BLOOMSBURY SQUARE,  
"Friday eve, February 16."

It was with the presentiment that legal measures were likely to be finally resorted to, that his Lordship's confidential solicitor had previously

1816. thought it advisable that the servants resident in Piccadilly during the period of Lord and Lady Byron's cohabitation should be examined. Mr. Hanson wrote therefore the following letter to his Lordship :

“MY DEAR LORD,—

“I lost no time in communicating with Mr. Farquhar, the Proctor, on the subject of counsel, and which he will immediately attend to. Sir Samuel Romilly had a general retainer for you some time ago, so that he is secured. I think it is of the first importance to know what the servants of your household can say; I therefore propose, with your Lordship's permission, to be at your house to-morrow evening to see them separately; but you had better not mention that intention to *any one*, nor be present; let us take them unexpectedly, and we shall be more likely to get at the truth.

“If you would brush up your recollection of the different circumstances of difference between Lady Byron and yourself, it is of vast importance that I should know them. From what I have hitherto been informed, I am not under any apprehension of the result, were they even to press matters to extremity, which I much doubt.

“Believe me, my dear Lord,

“Yours most faithfully,

“JOHN HANSON.


“BLOOMSBURY SQUARE,

“*February 12, 1816.*”

Lord Byron's servants were examined the next evening, and the result of that examination gave fresh cause to apprehend that no public inquiry



could possibly be so detrimental to his Lordship's character and honour as a silent compliance with the demands of the Noel family. Mr. Farquhar and Mr. Hanson made every effort to extort from the household domestics a confession of some facts unfavourable to his Lordship, that they might know the real strength of their position. The first answers which they received were of that kind which made them almost ashamed of asking any further questions. The general reply was, "*What! Is not my Lady coming back? Is anything the matter?*" It should be remarked that the principal female servant, the housekeeper, so far from being an ancient retainer of his Lordship's family, had been introduced by her Ladyship, and was the wife of Sir Ralph Noel's butler. Mrs. Milward (that was her name) demonstrated the same surprise as the rest of the servants, and was so far from entering at all into the views of her Ladyship's family, that she remained with Lord Byron to the last day of his residence in London—a persevering fidelity not to be expected from the wife of the principal domestic of that family, the heiress of which his Lordship was represented to have so shamefully maltreated. Mrs. Milward, together with every other servant in the house, attributed the principal share in the attack upon his Lordship to Mrs. Clermont, of whose influence many scandalous stories were told not necessary to be inserted in this place.



1816.    In addition to this inquiry, another investigation, namely, that alluded to in Mr. Hanson's last letter, was deemed absolutely indispensable by Lord Byron's personal friends. The assertions of ill-treatment contained in Lady Byron's letters, however vague, left upon their minds an impression that something must have taken place of a serious nature with which they were altogether unacquainted. It may be recollected that Lady Byron had hinted as much in her short letter to Mr. Hobhouse, when she told him that "he must be ignorant of the long series of circumstances which had necessitated" the separation. In consequence, his Lordship's personal intimates, who thought it possible that some real cause of complaint might exist, with the details of which Lord Byron might rather trust their ears than those of his lawyers, and who naturally deemed it requisite for their own honour, as well as for their adequate judgment on the case, to be made acquainted with the actual particulars of the whole unhappy difference, lost no opportunity of putting every question to his Lordship as well as to the inmates of his house, which could give them any insight into this mysterious transaction. They entreated Lord Byron to be explicit with them—they tried him in every hour—they watched him under every passion—they employed every argument and means of research: the answer they received was uniform.

“Lady Byron may have cause to complain of my temper. My manner may have been harsh and rude, perhaps occasionally insulting. My pecuniary distresses and my ill state of body, increased by no very unfrequent excesses, resorted to for the sake of oblivion, may have made me appear half frantic, but my violence was never directed against my wife. I made no secret of hating marriage, but was equally explicit in avowing my love for her. If she can prove that each day I said or did something to give her pain, I can prove that not a day passed without my appearing at least to afford her satisfaction. She may have seen me sullen, silent, or morose, but she has often been herself surprised sitting on my knee, with her arm round my neck. If I was often neglectful, I was more often fond. I may have been indiscreet—perhaps too much so. I poured all my confessions into her ear, told her of all my failings, never committed a fault without making her my confidante. Even those errors which must have been most offensive to herself, whether in word or deed, were communicated with an unreserve which may have been mistaken for insult, but which was not meant for such. The allegations at which she hints, my respect for her character, and confidence in her veracity, almost make me think must have some foundation; and I am therefore inclined at times to believe that at some periods of my married life I might have been deprived of reason, for I solemnly protest that I am unconscious of the commission of any enormity which can have prompted Lady Byron to desert me thus suddenly, thus cruelly.”

1816. 7

Such were the unvaried assertions of Lord Byron during the whole of the period from the



1816. notification of his wife's intentions to the signature of the separation. His friends, not content with general assertions, thought fit to specify particular depravities, extending their queries even to those points which, unless they had thought it just possible that he might have laboured under temporary derangement, they would not have ventured to touch upon for an instant. They were reduced to this cruel extremity by the persevering silence of his Lordship's accusers, who hinted at horrors the very nature of which they refused to designate, and which to this moment remain unknown to them.

They inquired not only of his Lordship, but of Mrs. Leigh and Captain Byron, who were perhaps much more than themselves impressed with the notion that something had occurred to induce her Ladyship never to return. Lord Byron's friends felt that whatever had occurred must have occurred before the date of Lady Byron's letter of January 16, when she certainly had no intention of leaving his Lordship, and that, therefore, the real fault could be no such enormity as would prevent a virtuous woman from residing in the same house with her husband. Yet they believed that his Lordship might possibly have given way to violences sufficient, when narrated, to terrify her Ladyship's relations, and induce them to prevent her return. They made every inquiry on this point. Mrs. Leigh avowed that there was occasionally something in his

Lordship's manner, when talking of his embarrassments as a married man, which terrified her, and which might terrify Lady Byron. She mentioned particularly one instance when Lord Byron desired his wife to walk out of the room with him, and when his air and tone were such as to make her glad that she saw them come back again. She recollected that Lady Byron had once asked Lord Byron if she was in his way before the fire, and that he had answered, "Yes, very much in his way." She knew that after Lady Byron had been brought to bed, she complained that Lord Byron had made such a noise during *the whole night*, by throwing up soda-water bottles against the ceiling of the room above which she slept as to deprive her of her sleep. Captain Byron also had a general impression that Lady Byron believed Lord Byron hated her, and wished her absent; but neither he nor Mrs. Leigh was aware of *any individual fact* tending to prove the least violence. His Lordship's friends understood that the suspicion as to the soda-water bottles had been communicated by Lady Byron the next morning to Mr. Le Mann: they found it had been, but the ceiling of the room retained no mark of blows; and Lord Byron's habit of drinking soda-water, in consequence of taking magnesia in quantities, and of knocking off the heads of the bottles with a poker, sufficiently accounted for the noise, although it did not perhaps exactly excuse the persuasion of Lady

1816. Byron. As to any wish to disturb the rest of the infant, Lord Byron would have been acquitted by Mrs. Clermont herself, who told Mr. Hobhouse a few days after Lady Byron was brought to bed, that she had never seen a man so proud and fond of his child as Lord Byron. This was in reply to a question of Mr. Hobhouse, who asked Mrs. Clermont whether Lord Byron was not disappointed in not having a son instead of a daughter. Lady Byron herself more than once said to Lord Byron that he was fonder of the infant than she was, adding also what, to be sure, might have been as well omitted, and "fonder of it than you are of me."

A horrid story of Lord Byron having asked his wife when in labour whether the child was dead having become common, his friends put the question to him and his sister. He answered that he was content to rest the whole merits of his case upon Lady Byron's simple assertion in that respect. "She will not say so," he frequently repeated, "though, God knows, poor thing! it seems now she would say anything; but she would not say that—no, she would not say that." It appeared evident to Lord Byron's friends that from his wayward habits and eccentric modes of expression, and from the irksomeness superinduced by the embarrassments of his married life, which continually preyed upon a temper naturally irritable, Lady Byron had conceived that she was the object of Lord



1816.

Byron's aversion ; and, having once adopted that notion, had perhaps in some degree contributed to those very demonstrations of discontent which were the cause of her vexation. They discovered that even on the first night of his Lordship's marriage he had been seized with a sudden fit of melancholy, and had left his bed, and that this oppression had lasted during the first week of his residence with Lady Byron, at Halnaby, whither they repaired immediately after the ceremony. They knew that Lady Byron had endeavoured to alleviate this melancholy by inquiries, affectionate indeed, but perhaps ill-timed, into the cause of it, and that, whether any confession or not was made of that cause, her Ladyship appeared always dismayed when she spoke of her residence at Halnaby. They knew that during her latter residence at Piccadilly she appeared very unhappy, and once or twice remonstrated with Lord Byron on the way of life which he had selected as most conformable to his notions of happiness. Lord Byron did not conceal from them that during his wife's *accouchement* he had been guilty of infidelity with one female, and one female only, and that he had been more guilty in telling her of this weakness, for which, however, she gave him a plenary pardon, and probably alluded to this indiscretion in telling him to do nothing that was *naughty*, in her letter of the 15th of January, from Woburn. They heard also his confession of repeated excesses

1816. committed at the house of one or two acquaintances, which increased his irritability to a lamentable degree, and gave rise to every expression of regret and horror at his condition (he generally having an execution in his house besides a complaint in his liver), but never caused any affront to his wife. He owned that he had refused to become acquainted with Mr. Friend and Mrs. Jonathan Raine, and other friends of Lady Byron's, and that this had drawn from her Ladyship the expression that they might as well live asunder as have no community of enjoyment in any way. He had said also that he would go abroad, and that he would live alone in London; and had mentioned other schemes, which those who knew him would never have reflected upon for a moment, but which had a painful effect upon her Ladyship. He not unfrequently indulged in expressions of despair and disgust at life, which would have been equally disregarded by his old companions, being by no means an unusual topic amongst them, and received with their due value, but which gave rise to the most serious apprehensions in the mind of a young woman of three-and-twenty, who, to the accident of really knowing nothing of mankind, joined the misfortune of imagining that her assiduous studies had made her a very competent judge of human character. He was in the habit of communicating all his passing notions, paradoxical or not, to her; and the more she expressed her surprise

the more highly did he colour his sentiments, and to clench his doctrine sometimes represented his principles as being deduced from his own practice. His friends had long been acquainted with this singular love of the marvellous in morals which Lord Byron evinced in his conversation and his compositions, but which he was so far from carrying into his own conduct that no man was ever more commonplace than himself in an habitual display of kindness, generosity, and all the every-day virtues of civilised life. He had the habit of marking in his books traits of singular depravity, and poor Lady Byron mistook these marks for notes of admiration. His sister has more than once said, half jokingly, "Byron is never so happy as when he can make you believe some atrocity against himself." 1816.

What, then, did his Lordship's friends collect from the inquiries? That Lord and Lady Byron were a very ill-assorted couple; that his Lordship had certainly been guilty of some inexcusable indiscretions, and had taken no pains to conceal his perversities from his wife, nor to consult her feelings by restraining his own. But they also came to the conclusion that Lord Byron had not been guilty of any enormity, and that the whole charge against him would amount merely to such offences as are more often committed than complained of, and, however they might be to be regretted as subversive of matrimonial felicity, would not render him amenable to the laws of



1816. any court, whether of justice or of equity. The complexion given to his conduct, whatever it was, they believed to be derived as much from the person viewing as from the thing viewed; and not being able to discover that his Lordship had been very wicked, they reposed at last in the other more charitable supposition, that her Ladyship had been a little mistaken, and had not been able to understand Lord Byron in the intercourse of one year quite so well as they had been capable of doing by an intimacy of ten years. Being aware that her Ladyship had once thought him mad, and had avowed her error in believing him so, instead of discovering that he was only desperately wicked, they were inclined to question the precision and justice of any deductions which she might make from moral symptoms; and never having themselves seen any series of depraved actions which it was easy to mistake for insanity, at least not in any one with whom it was possible to associate for an instant, they were totally at a loss to guess at the actual nature of that grievance of which her Ladyship had to complain.

Lord Byron, then, made every preparation for *going into court*, and contemplated not waiting for any proceedings on the part of his wife's family, but himself immediately *citing* her Ladyship to return to her conjugal duty. Mr. Hanson and his Proctor, Mr. Farquhar, were strongly of opinion that this might be the

wisest scheme to follow, and the most becoming a man whom they conceived to be deeply injured. These legal advisers were induced to conceive more than ever that her Ladyship's lawyers knew she had no case to make good; for, as was before mentioned, his Lordship no sooner put himself on the defensive than every effort was made to conciliate him into an acquiescence in an amicable arrangement. Amongst other endeavours, an application was made to him through a nobleman, whose name commands love and esteem, and who was sure to weigh with Lord Byron. That excellent person wrote to his Lordship the following letter about the beginning of March:

“MY DEAR LORD,—

“A very old and intimate friend of mine, who is a professional character, sent to me to-day, and, on my meeting him, expressed a wish that I would be the channel of communication to you on a subject much too delicate to interfere in without your express permission. As, however, I have the very best opinion of the head and the heart of my friend, Dr. Lushington, I am persuaded that his motives are most honourable both to his client and you; and as he assures me that the communication he wished me to make might save both from much unnecessary vexation, I did not like to decline entirely all conversation on the subject, as I had no reason to think that it was your wish that I should do so.

“I therefore answered that I would inform you

1816. that he has asked me to speak to you on the subject upon which Lady Byron had consulted him, and that if you had no objection to hearing what he wished to convey to you, I would so far comply with his request as to become, *with your approbation*, the channel of communication. You will, I hope, understand that the words underlined are not mere words of course. If I can be of any use to you or yours, nothing can give me more pleasure; but on matters of so very delicate a nature as family quarrels, no one, in my judgment, even with the best views, has a right or an excuse to obtrude his services, much less his advice or opinion, unless he is requested, or at least encouraged, to do so by the wish of both the parties.

“Yours ever sincerely,

“VASSAL HOLLAND.

“P.S.—Should you like to hear the object of Dr. Lushington’s communication, I will call on you when or where you fix for the purpose.”

Lord Byron, previously to the receipt of this letter, had endeavoured to see Lady Byron—indeed, at one time he had actually ordered his carriage to take him to Mivart’s Hotel at six o’clock, so entirely was he convinced that an interview would give him a very good chance of arranging the whole affair; for it is not to be supposed that his Lordship was not more eager for a reconciliation than for a suit at law. However, he was afraid that his abrupt presence might occasion some distress, and determined



first to write to her Ladyship, which he did in 1816.  
affectionate terms, entreating she would see him.  
Lady Byron returned the following answer :

“I regret the necessity of declining an interview under existing circumstances. It must subject my feelings, which are now so much harassed, to a still more distressing trial.

“A. I. BYRON.

“MIVART'S HOTEL,  
“*March.*”

Lord Byron's friends had hopes, from the softened tone of this letter, that her Ladyship was about to relent. Lady Melbourne, her Ladyship's aunt, was then requested to do her utmost to persuade her niece to return, and complied with the wishes of his Lordship's friends, but was received in a manner which at once dashed all their expectations. Lady Byron wrote to Lady Melbourne, “wondering,” as she said, “that Lord Byron had not more regard for his reputation than to think of coming before the “public,” and thus persevered in her tone and style which, by insinuations of the above kind, gave every latitude to conjecture, and was more injurious to his Lordship even than the designation of an individual offence.

Lord Byron did not wish to decline the respectable mediation of his noble acquaintance, the writer of the letter above given, hoping that by his means some chance of reconciliation might

1816. arise, or thinking that, sanctioned by such a name, no one could impute his compliance to improper motives. He saw this nobleman, therefore, who had before seen Lady Byron, and who transmitted a proposal for a separation, of which the outline was that, of the thousand pounds per annum at present payable to Lord Byron from his wife's family, five hundred should be resigned to her Ladyship, and that his Lordship should sign an instrument, giving up half the Wentworth property, at the death of Lady Noel, to his wife. Unfortunately, the proposal was so drawn up as to involve a hint that Lord Byron would thus *have gained £500 a year by his marriage* at present, besides his future contingency.

His Lordship was overwhelmed with indignation at this, which appeared to him a studied insult, but which his friends presumed to have been the technical language of Lady Byron's lawyers. He rejected the terms at once; and his anger was not allayed at hearing that Lady Byron had herself drawn up the proposal. But whatever he felt, the following letter forbore to give any excuse for further exasperation:

" March 4, 1816.

"I know of no offence, not merely from man to wife, nor of one human being to another, but of any being almost to God Himself, which we are not taught to believe would be expiated by the repeated atonement which I have offered even

for the *unknown* faults (for to me, till stated, they are unknown to any extent which can justify such persevering rejections) I may have been supposed to commit, or can have committed, against you. But since all hope is over, and instead of the duties of a wife and the mother of my child, I am to encounter accusation and implacability, I have nothing more to say, but shall act according to circumstances, though not even injury can alter the love with which (though I shall do my best to repel attack) I must ever be yours,

“B.

“I am told that you say *you* drew up the *proposal* of separation; if so, I regret to hear it; it appeared to me to be a kind of appeal to the supposed mercenary feelings of the person to whom it was made—‘if you part with, etc., you will gain *so much now*, and so much at the death of,’ etc., a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence! No allusion to my child; a hard, dry, attorney’s paper. Oh, Bell! to see you thus stifling and destroying all feeling, all affections, all duties (for they are your first duties, those of a wife and a mother), is far more bitter than any possible consequences to me.”

Since Lady Byron’s arrival in London, repeated efforts had been made by his Lordship to obtain, if not a reconciliation, at least some statement of his delinquencies. Mrs. Leigh had at first been refused to see Lady Byron, on the grounds “*that her lawyers had forbid all intercourse with Piccadilly*”; but a meeting had afterwards taken place, not only between Lady Byron and Mrs.



1816. Leigh, but also between her Ladyship and Captain Byron at the desire of the former, and for the purpose, it appears, of assuring both his Lordship's relations that Lady Byron was determined *not* to return—*no, not if her father and mother would go upon their knees to her so to do.* She might, she said, be *worsted in court*, but still nothing but force should make her come back; she hinted, in pursuance of her former style, *that something had passed which she had as yet told to no one, and which nothing but the absolute necessity of justifying herself in court should wring from her.* She added, it was cruel to force her into a public court.

It may be easily conceived that his Lordship's relations were much alarmed at this first insinuation, and that it was not to much purpose that Lord Byron's legal adviser told them, that the fact of Lady Byron having *lived conjugally* with his Lordship up to the last day of her departure, and having written affectionately to him after that time, took away all weight from the supposition of his having been guilty of any such deep crime as Lady Byron appeared to have in reserve against him; and also, that whatever she might feel inclined to assert, her own conduct had been too equivocal to allow the least importance to be attached to her solẽ declaration. Both Mrs. Leigh and Captain Byron, although they confessed themselves entirely ignorant of what Lady Byron meant to adduce, still were

inclined to deprecate public proceedings; and when it is recollected that one was far advanced in pregnancy, and the other on the eve of being himself married, it will not appear surprising that they should have adopted such an opinion, and have wished their relation to avoid if possible an investigation, in which they themselves would be called to play so painful a part. Lord Byron continued to protest to his legal advisers and his friends that, unless a total oblivion had surprised him of all that had happened during his marriage, *it was absolutely false that he had been guilty of any enormity—that nothing could or would be proved by anybody against him, and that he was prepared for anything that could be said in any court.* He had before had an opportunity of forming some judgment as to the deficiency of his assailant's case. A young woman, Miss Emma Roberts, had called upon his Lordship with a melodrama, entitled *The Bravo of Bohemia*, and had left her name written on a scrap of paper. This fragment his Lordship, with an intention, surely pardonable, of making her ridiculous who had made him wretched, inclosed in a cover, subjoining in a feigned hand, *A Friendly Hint*, and directing the whole to *Mrs. Clermont*, at Mivart's Hotel. He was aware that this woman had been busily employed in procuring, or rather searching for every proof which might tend to the condemnation of the husband in his suit with his wife; and contemplated some

1816.

Byron

1816. humorous embarrassment on the part of the inquiring governess and the fair author of *The Bravo of Bohemia*. But he did hardly expect to see in a morning paper a few days afterwards the following advertisement :

“A FRIENDLY HINT.—It is very important that an interview should take place between the person who enclosed an address with the above words written under it, and the person to whom the envelope, enclosing the same, was directed. If such person will appoint a time and place for a meeting, or convey more direct information, the strictest honour and secrecy may be relied on.”

If what Miss Emma Roberts might be supposed able to say against his Lordship was so “*very important*” to be known to Mrs. Clermont and her Ladyship’s Counsel, it is but fair to conclude that those worthy persons were as yet unfurnished with anything “*very important*” by way of proof; and of this her Ladyship, saying to Captain Byron, that “*though she might not gain her cause,*” etc., was a further evidence.

It was on March 5 that Lady Byron had given Lord Byron to understand that she would give him a final answer on the proposition which he still continued to make to her of coming to some amicable arrangement *short of a separation*. His Lordship directed Mrs. Leigh to renew his protestations of consenting to any guarantee which Lady Byron might think necessary to secure her future comfort in living with him. It



was at his desire likewise that Mr. Hobhouse 1816.  
wrote to her Ladyship the following letter :

"11, GREAT RYDER STREET, *March 5.*

"DEAR MADAM,—

"Your Ladyship's injunction has hitherto prevented any intrusion either of a visit or an attempt at discussing the sad subject of my last letter ; but I hope that under the present circumstances I may stand excused for offering to your notice one or two considerations, at a moment when I am still flattering myself that all chance of reconciliation is not entirely lost. I learn that you are to give your final answer to Lord Byron this morning. Before, then, you come to a conclusion which it may be impossible to alter, and which will decide upon the fate of my friend, let me entreat you to put to yourself the question, whether it be prescribed by any of the obligations of religion or morality, to visit with unrelaxing punishment any but monstrous and incorrigible offenders. For my own part, I most solemnly avow myself entirely ignorant, after the most serious and repeated inquiries, of any delinquency which can deserve the affliction apparently meditated as the fit return of the conduct of Lord Byron towards your Ladyship ; and it is impossible for me to believe that any great depravity on his part would have been followed by your affectionate invitation to him to rejoin you at Kirkby. The irritation which can be, and apparently was, mistaken for mental derangement, cannot in any way amount to a crime for which no pardon should be obtained ; and as correction and reform are the usual consequences of misconduct not tinged with the blacker colouring of vice, it seems to me the duty of every one, in all the relations of life, to refrain as

1816. long as possible from extreme and interminable severity.

“You owe it to yourself to provide against the repetition of that behaviour of which you complain; but you owe it to Lord Byron, to society, to God Himself, to make that provision by any means, rather than by those which must risk, or, I should say, insure the misery of yourself, and your husband, and your child.

“Propose any guarantees for future propriety on the part of my friend—any guarantees short of separation: if he refuses to grant them he will want all excuse, and you be relieved from the remorse which I know the reflection of your having at once and in the first instance proceeded to extremities, will inevitably produce. Again, let me pray you to hesitate before you proceed to a decision which a presumed necessity for perseverance may render irrevocable.

“Ever your most faithful humble ser<sup>t</sup>.,

“JOHN HOBHOUSE.”

Mr. Hobhouse was the more anxious that this letter should be delivered, because on the morning of the 5th a meeting of Lord Byron's Counsel took place at Doctors' Commons, and it was possible that the consequence of that meeting would be an immediate *citation* of her Ladyship—an extremity which Lord Byron and his friends wished to avoid, but which his legal advisers, as was before mentioned, conceived might give some technical advantages to his Lordship in any suit which might be hereafter carried on between the parties.

Her Ladyship's final answer was, however, already in the possession of the nobleman whom

she had before selected as her channel of communication; and although this letter<sup>1</sup> was sent, Mr. Hobhouse was in some measure spared the mortification of reflecting that his third attempt at recalling her Ladyship to what he conceived a sense of her duties had been equally fruitless with his former efforts. Mr. Hobhouse, just after he had left his letter at Mivart's Hotel, happened to call on the person just alluded to, and found he had her Ladyship's answer to all proposals of reconciliation in his pocket. Lady Byron's letter was delivered to Lord Byron the same evening. It was as follows:

"I deeply regret the necessity you have imposed upon me of replying to your last letter, delivered by Milward, for, anxious as I am to avoid any allusions which may irritate or wound your feelings, I must not incur the hazard of leaving an erroneous impression upon your mind by an ambiguous or undecided answer.

"Most calmly and repeatedly have I weighed all that has passed, and after the maturest deliberation the result is a firm conviction that a separation is indispensable. This resolution is not formed under the impulse or at the suggestion of others; it is mine, and mine only, and for the consequences I alone am responsible.

"I am not less surprised than hurt at the view you have taken of the proposal Lord Holland sent you. The matter and manner were dictated and approved by me. Certainly I am guiltless of all intentional misstatements, and still more strongly do I disclaim all design of insult

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.



1816. and offence. If there be any error in the statement, or if the inference appear to you unfair, let the mistakes be pointed out, and they shall be corrected, and any modification of the proposal receive a candid consideration.

"Without doubting the justice of my cause, I have no hesitation in acknowledging my reluctance to have recourse to any other mode of redress, whilst a possibility remains of obtaining the end with your consent. And after your repeated assertions that when convinced my conduct had not been influenced by others, you should not oppose my wishes, I am yet disposed to hope those assertions will be realised.

"An interview I must decline—all my former reasons for avoiding so painful a meeting derive additional force from consideration.

"A. I. BYRON.

"MIVART'S HOTEL,

"*March 5, 1816.*

"I have now seen Mrs. Leigh, who has heard from me the substance of this letter, and it does not appear to me that any further answer can be required to her communication.

"*To LORD BYRON.*"

This letter was the last which Lady Byron wrote to her husband; and those who have seen the correspondence will pronounce it to be by far the mildest of all her epistles.

The receipt of it not a little altered the position of the respective parties to the eyes of Lord Byron and his friends. The tone of aggression was dropped against him; and her Ladyship, instead of menacing judicial proceedings against

a person anxious to avoid them, was here rather a suppliant for a private arrangement with one who had given every demonstration that he should prefer a public investigation of the whole affair. His Lordship had done enough to show that *he was afraid of no exposure*, and having thus given his friends the only guarantee which the mysterious silence of his antagonists would allow him, of his own innocence, he was justified in weighing the *petition* of his wife—for petition it may be called—and in comparing the expediency of a refusal and of a compliance with her entreaties. Lady Byron in her letter refers to a promise given of acceding to her demand if he should be convinced it proceeded from herself. The fact is, that in Mrs. Leigh's first letter, written after Sir R. Noel's first proposal, Lord Byron had directed his sister to make an assertion equivalent to what Lady Byron mentions, but the repetition of this assertion does not appear on the face of the subsequent correspondence; and if it had been made, no one will deny but that Lord Byron had very good reasons for believing his wife laboured under a constraint liable to such partial fluctuations of feeling as gave him a chance of her return as long as he did not consent to a private separation. But if this motive had not existed, the shameful rumours, before mentioned, gave him a right to resist as long as his character required a non-compliance, and entirely altered the position in which he

1816.

1816. might have otherwise stood with relation not only to his wife but the world at large. Now, however, that his wife had chosen to take upon herself the whole responsibility of the change operated in her conduct during the residence of a few days—it could not be a week—at Kirkby; now that she had, first by communication with his own family and at last by letter, made every entreaty, and finally appealed to his honour for a *private* arrangement—he conceived himself at liberty to consult the wishes of Lady Byron. He had, indeed, before felt so much alarmed at the account which had been conveyed to him of her health, that he had desired his medical attendant, Mr. Le Mann, to wait upon her in order to report the real state of it to him; and that report, together with the repeated insinuations of Mrs. Leigh and others, who had seen her, was the chief inducement that weighed with him in consenting to enter upon measures preparatory to an accommodation.

His Lordship consequently directed Mr. Hanson to convey a *counter-project*, the basis of which was that Lord Byron would give up to Lady Byron the whole of her present fortune—that is to say, the £1,000 per annum instead of the £500 proposed by herself—but that he would make no arrangement respecting the Wentworth property, that being merely a contingent. His lawyer had told him that he could not make any stipulation as to that property without a



sacrifice of his rights so decided as to imply the very fear, the suspicion of which his whole conduct, as a man of honour, had been directed to remove. Besides this consideration, the consciousness of his own intentions with respect to that estate, when it should fall in, made him resolve not to be treated as if he were not to be trusted with the discretion of doing what was right; and his entire ignorance of the law made him, of course, inclined to listen to the repeated remonstrance of his solicitor against putting his name to any paper relative to his wife's contingent estate. In this feeling his solicitor was confirmed by the representations even of Sir James Bland Burges, who, although one of Lady Noel's nearest connections, and the trustee for the property, corroborated every suspicion with respect to her Ladyship's probable pecuniary views, in thus making over at once to her daughter a certain portion of the estate.

His Lordship's offer was lying with Lady Byron's adviser when he wrote to his cousin, Mr. Wilmot, requesting him to undertake the office of mediator for the purpose of some amicable arrangement. Mr. Wilmot attended immediately to this notice, and called on Lord Byron, having first waited upon her Ladyship, who repeated to him that reconciliation was impossible. Lord Byron's friends advised him to allow them to say to Mr. Wilmot, that as a *concomitant* of any private separation her Ladyship should give,

1816. under her own hand, a positive *disavowal* of all the grosser charges which common rumour attributed to his Lordship as the real cause of her Ladyship's reluctance to return to his house.

In these cases it is necessary to be explicit; and although the very mention of such suspicions ever having prevailed for an instant must be painful in the extreme, it must be specified that two of the charges struck at the very existence of Lord Byron as a member of society. One of these<sup>1</sup> referred to Mrs. Leigh, and had been so dispersed that the friends of that excellent woman had written, without any participation with Lord Byron, to her Ladyship on the subject, and had received from Lady Byron, of course, a distinct expression of her solemn denial of any such charge having originated with her. The fond and friendly terms in which they had corresponded since the departure of her Ladyship were, indeed, complete conviction, or rather were an exculpation, not of Mrs. Leigh—for she wanted none—but of Lady Byron. At the same time, it should be known that Lord Byron had very good reason for thinking that Mrs. Clermont had not been backward in encouraging such a horrid suspicion, which, though he might well despise, yet he thought his friends, for their own sakes, had a right at once to crush by the only means remaining, after it was determined to coincide with her Ladyship's wishes for a private arrangement.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D.

The other charge, as it referred to a crime more enormous, might be less terrific; but it was not to be neglected, and Mr. Wilmot entered into the propriety of obtaining the fullest denial of Lady Byron's participation in these monstrous scandals. It was agreed between Mr. Wilmot and Lord Byron's friends that he should explain decisively to her Ladyship the nature of both the charges, with one of which she was before, indeed, acquainted; and in order to be precise on so important a point, Mr. Wilmot was furnished with a short paper drawn up by Mr. Hobhouse, containing the substance of such *disavowal* as it would be expected her Ladyship should make. 1816.

The next day, Friday, March 8, Mr. Wilmot having communicated with Lady Byron, met Lord Byron and his friends at his Lordship's house. He communicated to them a paper containing minutes of his conversation with her Ladyship, and of an arrangement which she felt inclined to make.

The basis of this proposition was, *either* that Lady Byron should retain £500 per annum of her present fortune, and that Lord Byron should stipulate by a legal instrument, to abide by an arbitration to be appointed to decide on the Kirkby property when that should fall in; *or*, that arbitrators should be now appointed to arrange every particular of a private separation—and, either of these cases being previously



1816. agreed upon, her Ladyship avowed that she had no objection to declare that neither of the rumours mentioned to her by Mr. Wilmot had emanated from her or her family.

Both Lord Byron and his friends, without the least hesitation, declared that it was impossible for his Lordship to listen for an instant to this conditional *disavowal*, which was clearly made, in the above paper of her Ladyship, the bribe for separation by the very terms in which it was couched. It was too clear, indeed, that Lady Byron's friends were *taking advantage of any coincident rumour*, in order to *frighten* Lord Byron and obtain the best terms for her Ladyship; and that although Lady Byron was herself conscious that the rumours were base and unfounded, she, or her legal advisers, would, however, employ them as auxiliaries for the accomplishment of their ends. Her Ladyship's arrangement was therefore rejected, and Mr. Hobhouse added, that in any disavowal which was to be given by her Ladyship, she should expressly state, not only "that the rumours did not originate with her or her family, but *that the charges which they involved made no part of her charges against Lord Byron.*" It was agreed that Mr. Wilmot should state the charges in plain terms to Lady Byron.

On Saturday, the following day, Mr. Wilmot met his Lordship and his friends at Piccadilly, and read to them individually a paper, in which

Lady Byron distinctly disavowed for herself and those most nearly connected with her, having spread any rumours injurious to Lord Byron's character, and especially as far as regarded the two rumours specified to her by Mr. Wilmot; and stated also that neither of those two specified charges would have made part of her allegations if she had come into court. Mr. Wilmot asked Mr. Hobhouse whether he should think such a disavowal satisfactory if signed by Lady Byron and witnessed by himself. Mr. Hobhouse said that he should think it satisfactory. Upon which Mr. Wilmot showed him that the paper *was signed* by Lady Byron and *witnessed* by himself. Mr. Hobhouse proposed that the disavowal should remain in Mr. Wilmot's hands until the whole separation was arranged, in order to afford that gentleman a species of guarantee by his keeping a paper which, if his mediation should fail, he might destroy. Mr. Wilmot then showed Mr. Hobhouse a second paper, which he entitled "a principle of separation" and in which it was mentioned that—

"The parties agree to appoint mutually an arbitrator, who shall agree upon a referee, who may arrange a separation and take into consideration the following points :

"1. Lord Byron proposes to resign the whole of Lady Byron's present fortune.

"2. Lady Byron is anxious to receive only £200 per annum in addition to her present pin-money

1816. of £300 per annum, and to leave the remaining £500 per annum to his Lordship.

“3. Lord Byron shall stipulate, *in a legal form*, that when the Kirkby property shall fall in, he will make an arrangement with respect to that property on fair terms of arbitration; but both Lord and Lady Byron are agreed that no final decision as to that property shall be made at present or until it shall fall in.”

By some accident this paper was read only to Mr. Hobhouse, and not to Lord Byron's other friend who had been consulted on the occasion, and who, coming into Lord Byron's apartment some little time after Mr. Hobhouse, was shown by Mr. Wilmot only the paper of disavowal. His Lordship did not sign this second paper, but Mr. Hobhouse took a copy of it, which was afterwards transmitted to Mr. Hanson, his Lordship's solicitor.

On the Sunday afternoon, Mr. Davies, the gentleman above alluded to, and Mr. Hobhouse, being met in his Lordship's rooms, Lord Byron declared that he conceived, of course, that the whole of the three propositions were *to be discussed* by his arbitrator, and that as the two first could not possibly stand together, they being contradictory, so it was possible that the third might be objected to by his legal adviser. Mr. Davies, who had not before seen the paper, was of the same opinion. Mr. Hobhouse alleged that he considered the paper only as a memorandum; but that he thought Mr. Wilmot did believe the third



article of his paper to be established without appeal, and that his own individual persuasion was that it was nothing more than what was equitable. To this Lord Byron replied, that he had not the least objection to the thing if his lawyers thought he should comply; but that if Mr. Wilmot or Mr. Hobhouse had thought that he had bound himself not to take any opinion upon the subject, he had been entirely misunderstood. He had considered the memorandum as the paper to be put into his lawyers' hands, and into those of Lady Byron's legal friend, for *discussion*. 1816.

It soon appeared that Mr. Wilmot had misunderstood Lord Byron, for Dr. Lushington transmitted to Mr. Hanson Mr. Wilmot's paper as being final with respect to the third proposition of making a *legal* stipulation in reference to the Kirkby property. Mr. Hanson advised his Lordship by no means to make such *preliminary admission*; and when Dr. Lushington called upon him on Sunday the 11th, he informed him that Lord Byron could not consider that point as settled by Mr. Wilmot's paper; it should be, at least, discussed. Mr. Wilmot, on learning that some difficulty had arisen in the outset of the arrangement, entered, as Lord Byron thought, rather too warmly into an expostulation with him upon their mutual misapprehension; and his Lordship, moreover, fancying that his cousin, whom he had himself applied to as a mediator, had rather assumed the character of Lady Byron's

1816. *advocate*, was not perhaps sufficiently temperate in his reply to some queries<sup>1</sup> put in a tone, perhaps, a little too cavalier by Mr. Wilmot.

Mr. Hobhouse had viewed the transactions of the last Saturday in the same light as Mr. Wilmot, and a meeting which he had with that gentleman on Tuesday served in some measure to prevent any unpleasant consequences which, it is possible, might otherwise have ensued. But Mr. Wilmot was not to be persuaded to carry on his negotiations, and his mediation having thus failed, it is most probable that Lady Byron's *disavowal* was destroyed. Mr. Wilmot was sufficiently considerate, upon the suggestion of Mr. Hobhouse, to retract some expressions<sup>2</sup> which had dropped from him with respect to the participation of Mr. Davies in the views of his principle of separation, which he had supposed himself to have shown to Mr. Davies, but which he had not shown to that gentleman.

On the same day that Mr. Hanson had given him such positive advice not to *stipulate* anything at present relative to the Kirkby property, his Lordship wrote a letter to Lady Byron, assuring her that he was still ready to accede to her wish for a private separation, even in case Mr. Wilmot's mediation should fail. Mrs. Leigh also wrote to Lady Byron, requesting to see her on Wednesday (March 14); but to this proposition

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix G.

her Ladyship thought proper to return for answer, "that she declined the interview because, in the present state of the business, she should be obliged to state everything she heard to Dr. Lushington." It was fair to tell Mrs. Leigh this, who, to be sure, would never have guessed at this *obligation* on the part of a wife to quote against her husband *his sister's words*. 1816.

Lord Byron, notwithstanding he received no answer from Lady Byron to his letter of Sunday, still conceived himself, in consequence of having proceeded to a certain length in the negotiation, bound to make another offer to her Ladyship; and of the candour and fairness of this offer there can be but one opinion.

On Friday (March 16) he learnt that Sir Samuel Romilly had been consulted by Lady Byron, and although he was at a loss to account for this circumstance after being repeatedly assured that that gentleman had been retained for himself, he at once resolved to request Sir Samuel to undertake the arbitration. For this purpose, Mr. Hobhouse waited upon Sir Samuel Romilly with the following paper:

"If Sir Samuel Romilly is willing to accept of the sole and final arranging of the affair between Lord and Lady Byron, his Lordship declares that he will abide by Sir Samuel's decision, and that he empowers Mr. Hobhouse to convey this communication.

(Signed) "BYRON.

"13, PICCADILLY, *March 15, 1816.*"



1816. Sir Samuel Romilly declared to Mr. Hobhouse that he was not aware he had been retained by Lord Byron; and when his clerk showed him the retainer, remarked "that he had done a very incorrect thing in being consulted by Lady Byron, but that in the multiplicity of retainers, it was sometimes the case that names were overlooked." Sir Samuel Romilly professed his wish that the business might be arranged amicably, but *declined* the arbitration. In pursuance of the same principle, his Lordship, however, permitted Mr. Hobhouse to make, on his part, another proposal to Lady Byron, of a nature, and in a spirit, not to be mistaken. Mr. Hobhouse, on the same evening, wrote to her Ladyship, as follows :

"DEAR MADAM,—

"Lord Byron desires me to inform you that the reason of his finding any difficulty in assenting to the proposition relative to the Kirkby property, having been suggested by his legal adviser, and he being still willing to make such an advance as may give another chance of bringing the affair to an amicable termination, proposes :

"That some one person, hitherto unemployed by either party, should be nominated to decide *finally* whether or not his Lordship shall stipulate by a *legal* instrument to make such a settlement of the Kirkby property, when your Ladyship shall succeed to it, as shall be judged fair and equitable by your respective lawyers, appointing an arbitrator at the time. In other terms, whether the separation shall proceed upon the basis proposed in the third proposition of Mr. Wilmot's arrangement.

Such has been Lord Byron's wish that such a reference should be made, that he applied this day, through myself, to Sir Samuel Romilly, to take upon himself the arbitration, notwithstanding his having understood Sir Samuel had been consulted by your Ladyship. That gentleman, thinking proper to decline, he (Lord Byron) feels no objection to consenting that your Ladyship should name this referee; and if you could favour either Lord Byron, or myself, with the name of this person, I hope that in a few days the whole business may be arranged with little less delay than if nothing had occurred to prevent the settlement of the affair according to Mr. Wilmot's proposition. 1816.

"Believe me, dear Madam,

"Your very faithful servant,

"JOHN HOBHOUSE.

"11, GREAT RYDER STREET,

"*March 15, 1816.*"

Her Ladyship returned the next morning the following answer:

"DEAR SIR,—

"I had the pleasure of receiving your letter late last night, and take the earliest opportunity of replying to its contents.

"I consent to the proposition which Lord Byron authorises you to state, and I have no objection to the reference being made either to the Solicitor-General, Sir Arthur Pigott, or Mr. Shadwell. The selection of the individual is left to the option of Lord Byron and his friends.

"I consider that it will be necessary, in order to prevent all further misunderstanding, that the terms of the reference should be fixed

1816. previously, and I therefore propose that you should meet Colonel Doyle and make the preliminary arrangements before the referee is applied to.

"I should be obliged to you to inform me of the earliest time when you can meet Colonel Doyle, if you agree to that measure.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"A. I. BYRON.

"MIVART'S HOTEL,

"March 16."

Lord Byron named Sir Samuel Shepherd, and Colonel Doyle and Mr. Hobhouse had a meeting at two o'clock the same day. At that meeting, and after one or two subsequent communications, they drew up the following paper, which received the signatures of the two parties, and became the basis of the legal separation :

"Lord and Lady Byron refer to the sole and final decision of Sir Samuel Shepherd a question to be proposed to him, relative to which they empower their legal or other advisers to answer any such queries as the Solicitor-General may think necessary to ask for his information on that point.

"As a preliminary it is thought necessary to state the following particulars for Sir Samuel Shepherd's information :

"First, with respect to a separation by agreement, the parties respectively consider that point as assented to in case Sir Samuel Shepherd should undertake the arbitration.

"Secondly. In a principle of separation formerly discussed between the parties, it was proposed by



Lord Byron that the whole income of Lady Byron's present fortune should be now resigned to Lady Byron for her use; but Lady Byron would consent to receive only one-half of the said income, viz. £200 per annum, in addition to her pin-money of £300 per annum, secured to her by her marriage settlement. It is now agreed that this question is to be referred to their respective legal advisers, to be determined by them, calling in, if necessary, a third person to arbitrate between them, whose decision in this point shall be final, and make part of the articles of separation.

"The matter now to be arbitrated by Sir Samuel Shepherd relates to the *Noel* property; for it is hereby expressly understood and agreed that the separation itself, and the mode of fixing the proportion of Lady Byron's present income, are, and are to be, formally agreed upon as above specified, provided always that Sir Samuel Shepherd shall undertake the arbitration.

"Lady Byron, under the will of Lord Wentworth, her uncle, will, upon the death of Lady Noel, her mother, without issue male, become entitled to a life estate in a considerable landed property, the rental of which is between six and seven thousand a year. This estate, on the death of Lady Byron, would go to her son, if any, and, in default of issue male, in the first instance to another family, and only in certain contingencies to the present daughter of Lord and Lady Byron, so that Lord Byron has the power of immediately disposing of the reversion of this estate on the death of Lady Noel without issue male, for the joint lives of Lady Byron and himself. By the principle of separation formerly discussed and above referred to, Lord Byron was required to bind himself immediately by a *legal instrument*

1816. to give Lady Byron for her own use out of this property, when it should devolve to her upon Lady Noel's death, such a provision as arbitrators then appointed should deem reasonable. To this proposition, on the suggestion of his legal advisers, Lord Byron demurs, but consents, and the parties respectively do consent, that Sir Samuel Shepherd shall consider the point, and say, whether, under all the circumstances of the case, Lord Byron ought in fairness and equity now to bind himself by a legal instrument to make, on Lady Noel's death, such arrangements as may be deemed right by arbitrators to be appointed at that time. This, therefore, is the question submitted for Sir Samuel Shepherd's decision, and the parties mutually agree to be bound thereby; and that the separation shall be carried into effect on such terms and conditions as Sir Samuel Shepherd shall in this respect decide to be right.

"It is hereby, moreover, understood and agreed that this separation should be now drawn up and carried into effect by a conveyance nominated by Sir Samuel Shepherd; and if either party should be of opinion that in the draft he shall make, Sir Samuel's directions are not strictly complied with, reference shall be made to him, and his decision shall be final.

"The parties declare that in case Sir Samuel Shepherd shall decline the above arbitration, then the present document in every and each respect shall be considered null and void, and be cancelled, but that Sir Arthur Pigott, in the first instance, or in case he should also decline, Mr. Shadwell, shall be requested to act as arbitrator on the same conditions by the respective subscribing parties.

(Signed) "BYRON.

"A. I. BYRON."

On the Monday, the day after the signature of this paper, Mr. Hobhouse called on the Solicitor-General in order to obtain his consent to undertake the arbitration. He found that Sir Samuel Shepherd had been already applied to by Dr. Lushington, but had as yet declined to give an affirmative answer, his avocations being so unceasing as to make it a matter of doubt whether he could undertake the consideration of the case. After some conversation, however, he consented to accept the arbitration of the question, which he promised to decide upon as soon as his avocations would allow. Immediately on quitting Sir Samuel Shepherd, Mr. Hobhouse went to Mivart's Hotel, where he wrote the following letter to Lady Byron, and directed it to be delivered to her Ladyship :

"MIVART'S HOTEL.

"DEAR MADAM,—

"I have the pleasure of informing you that I have just seen Sir Samuel Shepherd, who, after some little hesitation, was kind enough to promise me that he would undertake the arbitration. He desired me to send him the paper drawn up by Colonel Doyle and myself, and added, that in three or four days he would appoint a time and place for seeing your Ladyship's and Lord Byron's legal advisers, whose presence, he told me, would be absolutely necessary in order to afford him every facility in forming his opinion. Will you then have the goodness to inclose the paper before alluded to, and transmit it to the Solicitor-General, with a memorandum of your Ladyship's and Lord Byron's present residences, that he may



1816. know to what place to convey the appointment which he may make with your respective lawyers.

“As this affair seems about to be brought to that termination, the prospect of which before induced your Ladyship to make so handsome a disavowal of the more heinous rumours and charges, and as the paper containing that disavowal was, I presume, destroyed on the failure of Mr. Wilmot’s mediation, I put it to your Ladyship’s generosity whether there can be any objection to your transmitting to me a similar declaration when the affair shall be entirely terminated. I can assure you that except as far as Mrs. Leigh is concerned, Lord Byron has always expressed, and does at this time express, a perfect indifference as to rumours which have no concern with him, as they relate only to some imaginary monster created by the envy and malice of mankind. His friends, however, look to your Ladyship’s justice and candour for some efficacious means of giving a flat denial to scandals, which, however absurd and unfounded, it should not be left to the tardy progress of time and truth to contradict. A perfect reliance on your Ladyship, and a reluctance to make the character and honour of my friend the apparent price of any bargain, prevented me from touching upon this subject during the progress of the negotiations with Colonel Doyle: but what I did not promise as a condition, I am sure your Ladyship will not refuse me as a consequence of those negotiations having met with a happy result.

“Believe me, dear Madam,

“Your Ladyship’s most faithful servant,

“JOHN HOBHOUSE.

“LADY BYRON, *March 18.*”

Her Ladyship’s answer was as follows :

1816.

“DEAR SIR,—

In consequence of your obliging information, I have directed Mr. Wharton, my solicitor, to convey the requisite paper to Sir S. Shepherd according to the usual forms. I beg to assure you, in regard to the remaining subject of your letter, that I have every wish to consider the interests and feelings of others, as far as may be in my power, consistently with the most candid considerations.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your very obedient servant,

“A. I. BYRON.

“*March* 18, 1816.”

It would now have naturally been supposed that the whole affair would have been shortly arranged, and that Lady Byron having attained that private separation which had been so much the object of her wishes, no further controversy would have arisen between the parties. In fact, Sir Samuel Shepherd appointed Monday, March 25, for the arbitration of the point relative to the Kirkby property; and after considering the question in presence of Mr. Hanson and Mr. Wharton, decided that his Lordship *should* stipulate by a *legal* instrument to make a provision out of that property when it should fall into Lady Byron's hands. Sir Samuel Shepherd at the same time named Mr. Butler, the conveyancer, to draw up the deed of separation. In this interval Lord Byron wrote his farewell to Lady Byron, and inclosed it to her with a note

1816. of which he kept no copy, but the substance of which, indeed, the words, as far as he could recollect them, were as follows :

“DEAREST BELL,

“I send you the first verses that ever I attempted to write upon you, and perhaps the last that I may ever write at all. This at such a moment may look like affectation, but it is not so. The language of all nations nearest to a state of nature is said to be Poetry. I know not how this may be; but this I know.

“You know that the lover, the lunatic, and the poet are ‘of imagination all compact.’ I am afraid you have hitherto seen me only as the two first, but I would fain hope there is nothing in the last to add to any grievances you may have against the former.”

It seemed fated that Lord Byron should never take any step without being misrepresented; it was said that he accompanied his *Farewell* with a request to know “where his *receipts* were”; but that story is equally false with every other that has been circulated by his assailants, and the fact is that his application respecting some receipts which her Ladyship had carried with her to Kirkby, was conveyed through Mrs. Leigh some days subsequently to the transmission of the verses and the above note. His Lordship conceiving the affair as finished, thought he might indulge in the expression of those feelings with which indeed he had been animated during the whole transaction. But he was, as usual,



misunderstood ; and instead of securing for himself what any one might expect, an amicable parting, rather reinvigorated the hostilities carrying on against him. It will be remembered that the *Farewell* contained only one word of reproach, if reproach it may be called ; and whether or not there was any misapplication in the epithet "*unforgiving*," those who read this correspondence will be competent judges. Her Ladyship did not deign any reply to his poetry or his prose, and such as called themselves her friends lost no time in designating the former as the product of hypocrisy, and of that affectation which he had deprecated as being attributable to this expression of his real sentiments. The verses on Mrs. Clermont, which were nothing more than the offspring of the same feelings and regrets, were by the same persons attributed to *actual* and *genuine* passion—so that although he was to be denied all credit for sincerity in the composition of the first copy of verses, the second were to be esteemed the very effervescence of the soul. In other words, his affection was feigned, his revenge was a faithful copy of his real feelings. He was condemned at all events, and under suppositions not only different but contradictory.

The verses to Mrs. Clermont were not transmitted to her, but when some copies of them had been dispersed by the indiscretion of his Lordship's publisher, it is to be believed that one of them

1816. found a way to the hands of the woman, whose share in all these unfortunate transactions will have been so distinctly seen in the preceding documents that it is needless to excuse his Lordship for visiting her with his indignant satire. Whether these verses had been seen by Lady Byron previous to Monday, March 25, is uncertain, but on that or the following day her Ladyship, meeting Mrs. Leigh, accused her brother to her as having encouraged his friends to abuse her in public.

On hearing this his Lordship, conscious that his conduct had been in that respect totally different from what it had been represented to Lady Byron, and wishing to convince her by every means in his power of her mistake, wrote to three of those friends who had the opportunity of conversing with him on this afflicting subject, and on receiving their answers transmitted them to her Ladyship.

From Lord Holland he received the following answer :

*" March 26, 1816.*

" MY DEAR LORD,—

" I have no difficulty in answering your questions.

" In the conversations I had with you, as well as in my correspondence with you, on the subject of the separation between you and Lady Byron, you uniformly spoke of her in a kind and considerate manner ; not a syllable of reproach on

the score either of temper or conduct ever escaped your lips in my presence, and even in lamenting some circumstance which occurred, you studiously and anxiously acquitted Lady Byron of having acted unkindly or improperly. In short, you spoke of her judgment, her veracity, her character, and her conduct, with much respect. 1816.

“It is but justice to Lady Byron to say that, in the interview I had the honour of having with her, she confirmed the impression which my slight acquaintance with her, and your representations, had given me, and spoke on the painful subject on which I saw her with propriety and judgment, professing great regard and interest for you.

“Of the causes of difference I was, am, and wish to remain, entirely ignorant; but as far as my testimony goes, I can say with great truth, that if those differences have produced a separation, there was no appearance in my interviews with you or Lady Byron of their having produced in either party any bitterness or disposition to express themselves harshly of one another.

“I am, my dear Lord,

“Ever truly yours,

“VASSAL HOLLAND.”

Mr. Rogers immediately returned the following reply:

“I lose no time in answering your question. The very first time I saw you after that event, you said (and indeed you seemed desirous that all the world should know it) ‘that wherever the wrong lay, it did not lie with Lady Byron; that Lady B. had been faultless in thought, word, and in deed.’ Those (I remember them distinctly) were your words; and everything that has since



1816. dropped from your lips on the subject before me, has breathed the same spirit.

"Yours very truly,

"SAMUEL ROGERS.

"*Tuesday Evening.*"

Mr. Kinnaird also returned his answer in these words :

"CLARGES ST., *March 26, 1816.*

"DEAR BYRON,—

"Pray excuse this piece of foolscap. It is not personal; but I cannot lay my hands on any other, and still less can I consent to delay answering the interrogatives of your letter, seeing that I entertain not the slightest doubt in giving to them one and the same negative reply.

"You ask me whether or no I ever heard you speak of Lady Byron with harshness, or impute to her any impropriety of character or conduct; or if you ever did sanction or authorise any condemnation of, or imputation against, her to me, or (as far as I know) to others? To these questions I unreservedly answer, *Never*. But I do not think I should give them a proper answer, were I not to add that I have never heard you express yourself of Lady Byron but uniformly in the same tone of unqualified respect for her character, and the motives of her conduct.

"I have heard you frequently, when discussing the situation into which you have lately been brought, and when the proceedings taken against you have been censured, anxiously except Lady Byron from any censure which implied more than her Ladyship having suffered herself to be misled. Whilst, on the contrary, the *only* act I can charge my memory with *ever* having heard you complain

of (and that strictly in terms of *complaint*, not *reproach*) was, that her Ladyship used to keep a journal, in which your casual expressions and minutest actions were noted down. Were I called upon to state any part of your conduct that had left upon me the strongest impression in my intercourse with you since Lady Byron left your house, it would assuredly be the uniform and scrupulous delicacy with which you have ever mentioned Lady Byron's name. 1816.

"I am, my dear Byron,

"Yours very faithfully,

"DOUGLAS KINNAIRD."

When these letters were enclosed to Lady Byron, his Lordship wrote her a letter, in which he deprecated all rumours which had a tendency to make her believe he had acted in the manner she suspected, and he told her that, except in the instance of Miss Emma Roberts and the *Friendly Hint*, he had never even played with so sad a subject for a moment, adding, what was before alleged, "that in the above case the pleasantry was not directed against her, but a person whom he might fairly attempt to render ridiculous, she having tried to make him wretched." As Lady Byron did not think fit to acknowledge the receipt of these letters, Lord Byron conceived that they had not been delivered, and sent Mr. Hanson to insist upon their transmission to her Ladyship. On the Thursday (two days afterwards) Mrs. Leigh received a note from Lady Byron, in which she said *the justification was*

1816. *unnecessary*, and she should return the letters. This she did through Mrs. Leigh the same day, and *without one word of answer to his Lordship*. Lady Byron had made a note at the bottom of Mr. Kinnaird's letter on the word *journal* ("I kept no such journal.—A. I. BYRON"). Mr. Kinnaird had made a mistake in stating that Lord Byron had mentioned his wife's keeping a journal for recording his expressions and minutest actions. What Lord Byron said was, that he presumed his words and deeds had been set down in Lady Byron's journal. Hence her Ladyship's phrase—"no *such* journal"; for she did keep a journal, and that her husband's conversation and manners did not escape her may be guessed by the sheet of paper which she filled with them, which she drew up for the inspection of Dr. Baillie in his Lordship's parlour, as before related.

Lord Byron's friends had daily fresh proofs that her Ladyship had unfortunately been very far from soothed, if she was convinced, by any efforts made to persuade her of the propriety of Lord Byron's conduct since the period of her departure, of which, indeed, whatever he may have done previously to that time, only one opinion can be formed. Her Ladyship went so far as to remonstrate with Lady Melbourne, her aunt, for having, as she called it, taken Lord Byron's part, and countenanced him by calling on him: as if the being civil to her husband was a condemnation of herself. One



does not well know how to reconcile this animosity with "the great regard and interest" with which she expressed herself respecting her husband to Lord Holland, except by supposing that when she thought Lord Byron's character was not a little depressed in the world, she could show that she had magnanimity enough to spare him; but when she found that there was, at least, a division of opinion in his favour, she could not allow of the least chance of any the smallest portion of the blame being attached to herself. Under this supposition, it is clear that every proof which was obtruded upon her of the candour and decency of his conduct, so far from being welcome, was a source of regrets, which, as is natural enough, were directed against the wrong person, and laid to the charge of him whom they should have acquitted instead of condemned. 1816.

Lady Byron was pertinacious in giving Lord Byron no reason to think she had forgiven him for any of the offences, whatever they were, committed against herself; so far, indeed, from forgiving him herself, she appeared, as far as could be at all made out by Lord Byron's friends, to be angry that he should have any chance of being forgiven by the world; for immediately on the *Farewell* becoming generally known, two even of her *confidential legal* advisers, who *must* have received this tone from her Ladyship, infringed upon the common decencies of their profession, which they had hitherto preserved, and declaimed

1816. against his Lordship as having added consummate hypocrisy to his other enormities. Her Ladyship had long ceased to pay any more attention to his Lordship's letters than she had before to his overtures; but she still continued in communication with Mrs. Leigh up to the end of the first week in April, when, upon that lady writing to her a short note, inquiring, at her brother's desire, what had become of the *receipts* before mentioned, and enclosing to her a ring which had in it the hair of Charles I., and which Lord Byron begged his wife, through Mrs. Leigh, to preserve for his daughter, Lady Byron returned *no* answer to Mrs. Leigh; but in a day or two came the following epistle from Mr. Wharton, the solicitor, to his Lordship:

"ALBANY, *April* 13, 1816.

"MY LORD,—

"I am directed by Lady Byron:

"1st. To inquire what your Lordship's wishes are respecting the carriage in which Lady Byron travelled to Kirkby.

"2nd. To inform your Lordship that the receipts in regard to which you have made inquiry are at Kirkby locked up, and shall be returned to your Lordship by any means that you may appoint as soon as Lady Byron goes to Kirkby.

"3rd. To acknowledge that Lady Byron has received from your Lordship a ring, which, according to your desire, will be preserved for your daughter.

"I have the honour to be

"Your Lordship's most obedt. humble servt.,

"GERALD R. WHARTON."

Such was the reply made to a very affectionate communication from Mrs. Leigh, whose last letter from her Ladyship was a singular conclusion to a correspondence hitherto carried on between Lady Byron and her "dearest Augusta," on terms which did not promise such a close of friendship. Mrs. Leigh had been directed by Lord Byron to mention that his Lordship did not wish Colonel Doyle to be one of the trustees of the deed of separation. She did, with her accustomed kindness, inform her Ladyship of this by letter. The answer came, directed on the outside, "The Honble. Mrs. Leigh," containing these words written in pencil :

"Lord Byron is informed that the trustees nominated are Mr. R. Colborne and Dr. Lushington."

This was the end of the communication between Lady Byron and Mrs. Leigh, whose kindness and attention to her Ladyship Lady Noel herself once characterised to Mr. Hobhouse as being "such as nothing could repay." How that kindness was cancelled it is impossible to guess. Mrs. Leigh recollects no offence on her part, except having omitted to shake hands with one of Lady Byron's female advisers, of whom she knew very little, and to whom she had certainly no reason to pay any particular attention. Lady Byron thought fit to expostulate with Mrs. Leigh upon this omission,



1816. and in these very inconsiderate terms: "I am sure Miss Doyle always took your part"; to which Mrs. Leigh could not help answering, "The only thing I have to request is that she will not take my part." In fact, there is no little folly in supposing that a sister wanted any one to take her part for not deserting her brother at his utmost need. About the same time that her Ladyship was thus loosening the last of those ties which bound her to her husband, Mrs. Clermont thought she might take up the pen so long laid down by her Ladyship. The writing was not quite so good, but the composition was in a style as decisive and persevering as if it had proceeded from Lady Byron herself:

"My LORD,—

"In consequence of an attempt which your Lordship has made to injure my character, I take the liberty of requesting to be made acquainted with the grounds on which I am accused of being a false witness, and those other charges which you are pleased to allege against me. If favoured with this information, I have no doubt of being able to prove in the most satisfactory manner that such accusations are wholly unfounded. I have hitherto, my Lord, said very little, nor could I have deemed myself of sufficient importance to have any weight in the scale of public opinion where your Lordship was concerned, had not you yourself attached importance to what you call falsehoods devised by me. The little I have said is *strictly true*, and what more I *may be compelled* to say shall be equally so, and my name will always be added to whatever I may write here-

after, as it has been to whatever I have written heretofore. 1816.

“ I am, my Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s

“ Obedient humble servt.,

“ M. A. CLERMONT.

“ April 9, 1816.”

It is not to be supposed that Lord Byron had any very great alarms for anything which *Mrs. Clermont* might write or have written either *hereafter* or *heretofore*.

But, in the first feeling of indignation, his Lordship wrote a letter to Lady Byron, under one of whose seals he remarked that Mrs. Clermont’s letter had been enclosed, in which he said everything to his wife in the kindest terms, as usual, but inserted this paragraph respecting his new correspondent :

“ Of the woman alluded to, you recollect that she came into this house uninvited by me ; that she was neither relative nor domestic, nor had any business here, except what appears to have been the business of her life. But she was your guest, and, as such, treated by me with every attention and proper consideration. She was *your* stranger, and I made her our inmate ; she came as a guest, she remained as a spy, she departed as an informer, and reappeared as an evidence ; if false, she belied—if true, she betrayed me—the worst of treacheries, ‘ a bread and salt traitress ’ ; she ate, and drank, and slept, and awoke, to sting me.”

His Lordship then repeated in prose something not unlike his imprecation in the “ Sketch from

1816. Private Life," but ended with his ordinary affection—

"To you, dearest Bell, I am ever very truly,  
"BYRON."

This letter, however, his Lordship was advised by his friends *not* to send. What he had said of the woman was too true to make her a fit person to occupy any portion of a correspondence between honourable persons. It is sufficient to mention here that Mrs. Clermont had been six weeks or two months an inmate of Lord Byron's house. We refer to the deposition of Mrs. Fletcher, and to other notices contained in these documents for the "*little which* she had said" in this affair; and shall only add in this place that Mr. Le Mann, who was in constant daily attendance during her residence at Lord Byron's, in a conversation with one of his Lordship's intimate friends, declared that his impression at the time was that Mrs. Clermont was introduced into the family *to watch Lord Byron*.

Lord Byron, then, did not send this letter; but on Sunday, April 14, he wrote the following letter to Lady Byron, which was the last he ever wrote to her, and may be contrasted with her Ladyship's *pencil* note, and her answer by proxy through her attorney Mr. Wharton:

"'More last words,' not many, but such as you will attend to. I have no reason to expect



an answer, neither does it import ; but you will at least hear me. I have just parted from Augusta, almost the last being with whom you have left me to part. Wherever I go—and I am going far—you and I can never meet in this world, nor in the next ; let this content or atone. If any accident occurs to me, be kind to Augusta ; if she is then also nothing, to her children. You know that some time ago I made a will in favour of her and her children, because any child of ours was provided for by other and better means ; this could not be in prejudice to you, for we had not then differed, and even now it is useless during your life by the terms of our settlement. Therefore be kind to her, for she has never spoken nor acted towards you but as your friend ; and recollect, though it may be an advantage to you to have lost a husband, it is sorrow to her to have the waters now, or the earth hereafter, between her and her brother. It may occur to your memory that you formerly promised me thus much. I repeat it, for deep resentments have but half recollections. Do not deem this promise cancelled, for it was not a vow.

“ I have received from Mr. Wharton a letter containing one question and two pieces of intelligence. The carriage is yours, and as it only carried us to Halnaby and London, and you to Kirkby, I hope it will yet convey you many a more propitious journey.

“ The receipts may remain unless you find them troublesome. If so, let them be forwarded to Augusta, through whom I would also receive occasional accounts of my child. My address will be left with Mrs. Leigh. The ring is of no lapidary value, but it contains the hair of a king and an ancestor, and I wish it to be preserved to Miss Byron. With regard to a subsequent letter from

1816. Mr. Wharton, I have to observe that it is the law's delay, not mine; and when the tenour of the bond is settled between him and Mr. Hanson, I am ready to sign.

"Yours very truly,  
"BYRON."

This letter was written just after Mrs. Leigh had taken leave of her brother, and Lord Byron desired Mrs. Fletcher to deliver it to her Ladyship. At the same time he gave her a card desiring her to ask Lady Byron, although she never answered his letters, just to make a pencil mark on that card as an acknowledgment that she had received the letter. Mrs. Fletcher did give the letter and the message to her Ladyship. Lady Byron seemed affected at the perusal of it, and said, "I shall answer this letter." She then, however, went downstairs and stayed some time, during which Mrs. Fletcher understood her to be with Mrs. Clermont. Returning to her room, she then said, "*This requires no answer,*" and actually *sent none*.

There may be a dignified reserve, a calm "tenacity of purpose" in this conduct, the consciousness of which may be the support of Lady Byron under her affliction; and she must make the most of it, for she will have no other. Lord Byron's friends were and are still at a loss to account for this extraordinary perseverance, at a time when a relaxation of severity could not have been prejudicial to her Ladyship. One word to

say that the promise was not cancelled, that his sister would not be forgotten, might have been spared even to the most blackened offender. But Lady Byron thought otherwise, and her kindness was withheld just at the opportune moment, for his Lordship had then most need of it. 1816.

Mr. Scott, the editor of a Sunday paper called the *Champion*, inserted in that paper, on April 14, a copy of the "Farewell," and the "Sketch from Private Life," neither of which had been published, but had, by the indiscretion of his Lordship's publisher, been handed about in print more generally than the circumstances of the case may seem to justify.

Mr. Scott knew very well that if it was wrong to hand them about in print, it was much more wrong to *publish* them; but no great delicacy was to be expected from this *gentleman*, who, from having been the editor of Drakard's *Lincoln Journal*, and from having been introduced into his present *business* by Mr. Perry of the *Chronicle*, and Mr. Hunt of the *Examiner*, had of late devoted not a little of his literary ingenuity to the special abasement of those editors and their friends. Mr. Scott had lately given Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street, a specimen of his accuracy of feeling, for a short time before the publication of Lord Byron's last poems, the "Siege of Corinth" and "Parisina," he had requested as a favour that he might be allowed the previous perusal of them. Mr. Murray, having granted this request, was not



1816. a little surprised to see a violent attack on these two poems in the *Champion*, previous to their publication, and meditated a remonstrance upon such an unprecedented return for his civility; but wishing to decline all further intercourse with a person of a turn of thinking so different from the generality of the *trade*, or of the town, refrained very wisely from his design.

To Mr. Scott's *publication* of the poems was added the most virulent abuse of Lord Byron for having written them and printed them. And this attack on his Lordship was followed up by the pens of some very discreet friends or partisans of Lady Byron, in nearly *all* the London newspapers. Their criticisms on his poems, or his character, it will be no edification to recall; but it should be told that when Mr. Perry of the *Chronicle*, after his manner, generously interfered to prevent all that was said against the husband, and for the wife, being taken for granted—and when he expressed his opinion, as a member of society, that there had been a conspiracy against the domestic peace of Lord Byron—what was the conduct of Lady Byron's family? His Lordship had never interfered with the editors of any of the papers which had attacked him; he had made no effort to defend himself in any way that could possibly implicate Lady Byron; but the instant that a single paper steps forward to say a word in his favour, Lady Byron's family will not allow of any defence being made for him, and Sir Ralph Noel

calls upon Mr. Perry to desire him to retract his defence. Mr. Perry, who might fairly have told Sir R. Noel that the press was open to him, very civilly inserts an article in his *Chronicle* of Thursday, April 18, stating that Sir Ralph Noel had assured the editor that *he knew* of no conspiracy against Lord Byron's domestic peace, and had added that he regretted and condemned the attacks made upon his Lordship in the public prints. Here, surely, the matter might have rested; but no, an impression, too favourable, might possibly have been left upon the public mind with respect to Lord Byron. Sir Ralph Noel writes a letter to Mr. Perry, accusing him of misstatement; telling him that not only *he knew* of no conspiracy, but that there *was* none; and adding besides, that Lady Byron had voluntarily, and at her own suggestion, put herself under the protection of her parents. This letter he desires Mr. Perry to insert in his *Chronicle*. Now it is not necessary to prove that nothing could be more *unfair* and *improper* than the publication of this letter, because, in the first instance, it was going an absurd length for any man to say that he insisted upon being allowed to answer for more than *he knew*, and to force the conviction of Mr. Perry, or any other man, by such a violent pretension, and because the mention of Lady Byron's *voluntary* retreat was bringing in her Ladyship to speak *to the public* respecting a fact, on all the particulars of which she, as well as

1816. Lord Byron, were bound in honour not to say a word *to the public*.

At the meeting between Sir Ralph Noel and Mr. Perry, Colonel Doyle, who accompanied the former, had read a letter to himself from Lady Byron, which her Ladyship had written for the purpose, and in which she had made the above declaration. To put such a communication in the hands of an editor of a paper, and so to prejudice the opinion of the public against his Lordship by reference to an authentic document from his wife, must be pronounced *inexcusable* in Lady Byron. It was just as inexcusable as it would have been to have communicated Mrs. Fletcher's deposition to the editor of the *Champion* or the *Times*, in order to make them contradict the falsehood inserted in those papers stating that Lady Byron had *fled* from her husband's house. Lord Byron would have been perfectly justified in publishing that deposition and all other documents, to prove that his wife's absence was *not voluntary*, the moment that Sir R. Noel's letter appeared in the paper.

Mr. Perry had the delicacy and good sense to see this, and this was the reason why he did not mention Colonel Doyle's having shown him Lady Byron's letter at their interview, and also why he did not publish Sir R. Noel's letter in his *Chronicle* of the next day, but wrote to him a long letter dissuading him from the publication, as an event that might most probably occasion the publication of the whole correspondence.



Mr. Perry, in that letter, told Sir Ralph Noel 1816.  
what was his general impression from such details as he had heard in society, and he was perfectly justified in saying that he was *morally certain* the publication of his first letter would lead to the divulging of the whole transaction, from Lady Byron's first letter from Kirkby to the last laconic note of her Ladyship; for, besides the common reports of drawing-rooms and parlours, Mr. Perry had been told so by one of Lord Byron's confidential friends, in consequence of whose advice he had warned Sir R. Noel not to insist upon the insertion of his letter in a newspaper. Mr. Perry had never seen the correspondence, nor did he say he had, but he spoke from very good intelligence as it turned out, although the publication of the correspondence did not then take place; for immediately on the appearance of Sir R. Noel's letter to Mr. Perry in the *Courier*, Lord Byron took the resolution of offering to go before the public at once, and did make that offer through Mr. Hobhouse the same evening.

Sir Ralph Noel, in spite of every propriety, and, as it has since been known, the advice of his friends, having determined that his letter should be made public, made it necessary for Mr. Perry to make some reply, and that reply he did make by publishing the letter written to the Baronet, dissuading him from publication. In this letter Mr. Perry entered somewhat into the merits of the case, giving a sketch of his conversation with

1816. Sir R. Noel and Colonel Doyle, and the consequence was, that some, even of the fairer and more candid portion of society affected to be displeased at the interference of an editor of a paper in so delicate an affair. They forgot how the editors of the other papers had interfered *against* Lord Byron; they forgot also that Mr. Perry had, in the first instance, only given his opinion *for* his Lordship, just as his competitors had given theirs *against* him; and that it was not Mr. Perry who interfered with Sir Ralph Noel, but Sir Ralph Noel who interfered with Mr. Perry.

Mr. Perry had a right to state his opinion, that there had been a conspiracy against the domestic peace of Lord Byron; and if Sir Ralph Noel chose to expostulate with him on that opinion, and to show him documents to controvert it, Mr. Perry had also a perfect right to state whether or not his original persuasion had been affected by that appeal and reference. The correspondence was not begun by Mr. Perry, and, so far from wishing that it should be public, he wrote his letter solely to prevent Sir Ralph from publishing. When Sir Ralph had published his letter, it only remained for Mr. Perry to show the efforts he had made to prevent so injudicious and unfair a proceeding, and this he did by publishing his own letter without comment.

If Sir Ralph Noel began this epistolary contest, it was ended by Mr. Perry—partly, it may be

conjectured, from the persuasion on the part of the worthy Baronet that there would be nothing very gainful to him in the continuance of such a warfare; and partly owing to the direct assurance conveyed to him from Lord Byron, through Mr. Hobhouse, that the inevitable consequence of any further appearance of Lady Byron's father as an advocate against Lord Byron in the newspapers, would be the publication of the whole correspondence. 1816.

A difficulty had arisen in drawing up the deed of separation which had retarded its final signature, and to this delay of the lawyers Lord Byron had alluded in his last letter to Lady Byron, as will be seen by a reference to that letter. Mr. Butler, the conveyancer, in his draft of the deed, had stated that the provision to be made for Lady Byron at her mother's death was to be *a part of the Kirkby property*. Mr. Hanson immediately called on the Solicitor-General and showed him that by the paper submitted to him the question was whether "Lord Byron should *now* stipulate legally to make a provision *out* of the property which should fall in at Lady Noel's death, according to terms of arbitration then to be adjudged."

The paper of submission, Mr. Hanson said, did not admit of the Solicitor-General deciding that *a part* of the property was to be given, but only a *provision out of the property*. The Solicitor-General owned that he had made a mistake, but



1816. that not having the deed about him he could not make the alteration, adding, however, that Mr. Hanson might call on Dr. Lushington, and state the matter to him. Mr. Hanson did call, and Dr. Lushington at once owned that the mistake had been made, and should be rectified. Mr. Hanson then was exceedingly surprised to find when the deed again came before him, that an option was still given to the future arbitrators to settle whether Lord Byron should give a provision *out* of the property or a *part* of it. He wrote to the Solicitor-General, and received shortly afterwards a second award in which the Solicitor had *confirmed* the draft. Mr. Hanson then begged Mr. Hobhouse to state what had been his meaning when he, with Colonel Doyle, drew up the paper of submission. Mr. Hobhouse returned the following answer :

“ DEAR SIR,—

“ You have asked me whether, in assisting Colonel Doyle to draw up the original paper to be referred to the arbitration of Sir Samuel Shepherd concerning the future arrangement of the Noel property, I contemplated assigning a share of the property itself to Lady Byron, or merely providing that her Ladyship should receive from Lord Byron, when the property fell in, a certain rent-charge.

“ In answer to this question I have to state that by referring to that paper I find the words made use of as follows: ‘To give Lady Byron for her own use, out of the property when it should devolve to her on Lady Noel’s death, such

a provision as arbitrators then appointed should 1816.  
deem reasonable.'

"I have no hesitation in stating that by the words 'provision out of the property' I conceived would be understood, 'an allowance from the profits of the property to be granted to Lady Byron as the holder of the estate.' I must at the same time mention that the point was not at all discussed, or made a question in any way, between Colonel Doyle and myself; and that my past and present impressions are derived merely from my own conception, and the notion that in similar cases the words 'provision out of the property' could not have any other interpretation than that above assigned to them.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servt.,

"JOHN HOBHOUSE.

"JOHN HANSON, Esq.,

"April 12."

Mr. Hobhouse's letter was transmitted to the Solicitor-General, who, on Friday, April 19, happened to call at Mr. Hanson's in Bloomsbury Square when Mr. Hobhouse was there. The Solicitor argued the case with Mr. Hanson, and in the course of conversation owned that he had gone beyond the terms of arbitration, and that he had confessed as much before on Mr. Hanson's second visit to him. He owned also that in most cases it was usual for the wife to have a provision from, and not a part of, the property, but that what had influenced him to change his mind was that, as the property came from Lady Byron, and as Lord Byron had a house of his

1818. own, he thought it but fair that her Ladyship should have a chance of having the Kirkby Mansion allotted to her. To this Mr. Hanson replied that Lord Byron had *no* house, and that as for the property coming from Lady Byron, it should be recollected that Lord Byron had made a very large settlement of £60,000 out of his own estate upon Lady Byron, without having any part of Sir Ralph Noel's property secured to him; so that at his death her Ladyship would be very handsomely provided for, whereas by her death he would receive no augmentation of his fortune. Sir Samuel Shepherd said he wished he had been made acquainted with all the circumstances of the case before, and wavered so visibly that it was uncertain whether he might not again change his mind and his award. At last, however, he ended by saying that Lord Byron might, to be sure, break from his decision, but that it would be a pity, and that for his part he gave his word of honour that were he Lord Byron he should prefer stipulating that the arbitrators should have *the option* of giving either a provision from, or portion of, the property to her Ladyship.

Lord Byron, notwithstanding Mr. Hanson had told him that the Noel family must have some sinister views in changing the form of the stipulation—and although, considering the great liberality of his settlement, he had a right to



1816.

prevent himself from being overreached in any bargain, yet was always determined to abide by the Solicitor-General's final award. Mr. Hanson could only procure his permission to make every effort to induce Sir Samuel Shepherd to abide by his correction, instead of his first wording, of the deed, and to delay his signature until it should appear that Sir Samuel would not change the form of the draft. His Lordship, at the same time, though he was unwilling to make any sacrifice of his just rights against the advice of his lawyer—and though it was clear and indeed confessed that the Solicitor-General had decided a point not left to his arbitration by the paper of submission—always professed himself indifferent as to the stipulation itself, and gave the best proof that he had been influenced by no mercenary motives, in some instructions which he left respecting the Kirkby property, in presence of his lawyer and two of his friends. The liberality of those instructions will be seen when the estate shall fall into his hands; and will give the lie to the absurd charge circulated, with the usual industry by the *soi-disant* friends of Lady Byron, that his Lordship had more regard to his pecuniary prospects than to the preservation of his character. One of her Ladyship's impressions, which she had communicated to Lord Byron himself, was, "that he would die a *miser* and a *methodist*." It is not unlikely that she saw the approximation of the completion of this

1816. prophecy in the legal efforts of Mr. Hanson to prevent the infringement of any of Lord Byron's marital rights. Lord Byron no sooner heard from Mr. Hobhouse that the Solicitor-General had said he should prefer and think it fairer to give the arbitrators the choice of naming the kind as well as the quantity of Lady Byron's future provision, than he declared he would sign the deed immediately, since he depended on Sir Samuel Shepherd's feelings as a gentleman, whatever demur there might have arisen between Mr. Hanson and him as a lawyer. He wrote to this purport to Mr. Hanson. At that moment appeared Sir R. Noel's letter in the *Courier*, the publication of which immediately induced him to make the offer before stated of annulling every previous transaction and preparation for a private arrangement, and of *going into court*. Mr. Hobhouse called on Colonel Doyle with this offer.

The Colonel, who, during the whole transaction in his interviews with Lord Byron's friend, had acted with the utmost frankness and propriety, said that although Lady Byron was not afraid of any publicity, yet that she and the whole family deprecated any change in the present arrangement; that nothing was farther from their wishes, and that he, the Colonel, could communicate the offer to her Ladyship, but that he was himself authorised to decline it. Mr. Hobhouse repeated that the offer was dis-

tinently made, and was to be transmitted to her Ladyship, and that the affair would consequently lie open until the next evening. Colonel Doyle also repeated that he could answer for Lady Byron, but that he would convey the intelligence to her. Mr. Hobhouse left Colonel Doyle, saying that he would call in the course of the next day. 1816.

Lord Byron wrote on the Saturday morning to Mr. Hanson, desiring to know when the deed of separation would be brought for his signature; and, receiving no answer immediately, Mr. Hobhouse did not call on Colonel Doyle, as he was not able to tell him when the last hand would be put to the whole affair. He wrote, however, the following note to him :

" 13, PICCADILLY.

" DEAR SIR,—

" I shall not trouble you with a visit to-day, as I have really nothing to say, except to repeat my earnest exhortations to Sir Ralph, not to proceed in his appeal to the newspapers, which will assuredly force Lord Byron's friends into the cruel necessity of making that defence for his Lordship which must necessarily involve the disclosure of transactions with which in other circumstances the public would have no sort of concern.

" Believe me, most truly yours,

" JOHN HOBHOUSE.

" April 20."

Colonel Doyle returned the following answer :



1816.

“DEAR SIR,—

“I have received your note. Sir Ralph having contradicted a paragraph in the *Morning Chronicle*, which, as it professed to come from authority, he deemed it indispensable to his honour not to pass over, has no intention of making any appeal whatever to the public; nor can Lady Byron or her friends have any desire to make disclosures of her case in the public papers, unless that measure should be forced upon them by publications on the part of Lord Byron's friends.

“I cannot, indeed, comprehend why this matter is not completely set at rest; every condition specified in the reference signed by both parties has been complied with by the Solicitor-General; and there is nothing but Lord Byron's signature to the deed wanting to give effect to the arrangement which both parties agreed to. It is no longer, as I have before said, within the province of the lawyers of either side to make objections.

“I remain, dear Sir,

“Yours obediently,

“J. H. DOYLE.

“10, MONTAGUE SQUARE,

“*Saturday.*”

Colonel Doyle was not aware that his Lordship had given directions to Mr. Hanson to bring the deed for signature with all convenient dispatch.

The deed was brought at three o'clock the next day (Sunday, April 21), and his Lordship put his signature to it shortly afterwards. The witnesses on the part of Lord Byron were Mr. Hobhouse and Mr. Hanson. The former of these gentlemen immediately wrote a short note

to Colonel Doyle, informing him of the completion of the affair as far as regarded Lord Byron. The same evening he received the following note from the Colonel: 1816.

"10, MONTAGUE SQUARE,  
"Sunday.

"DEAR SIR,—

"I received with great satisfaction your communication of the deed having been signed by Lord Byron, and I am glad that the business is now at an end.

"I think it proper, however, to mention to you that Lady Byron has this day received an intimation that it is the intention of Lord Byron's friends to publish immediately her letters and other documents in the papers. As this intimation contradicts the tenor of your former letter and conversation with me, in which you deprecated any such procedure, I have not believed it. But as such a communication has been made to Lady Byron, I think it but right to apprise you of it. You must, of course, feel, if true, that such a measure will inevitably bring upon Lady Byron the necessity, painful as it may be, of laying before the public all the circumstances of her case, from the day of her marriage to the present period. I trust this communication has no foundation in fact, but is merely the result of unauthorised rumour.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Very truly yours,

"J. H. DOYLE."

Mr. Hobhouse showed this letter immediately to Lord Byron, and returned the following answer:

1816.

"13, PICCADILLY TERRACE.

"DEAR SIR,—

"The intimation you have received does not originate with Lord Byron or myself.

"Very truly your faithful servt.,

"JOHN HOBHOUSE."

Colonel Doyle, when he wrote this last letter, was not aware that he was running an imminent risk of producing the very measure which he wished to prevent, and that the appearance of *threat* on the part of Lady Byron would very nearly induce his Lordship to take the step at which she thus dared him to venture. Lord Byron had put his papers, and all the documents referring to the transaction, into the hands of Mr. Hobhouse, with a discretion to make them public or not, as he should judge necessary for the justification of his friend. The publication of any private correspondence must at all times be an extremity, and Lord Byron, and Lord Byron's friends, felt that, except under very particular circumstances, it need not be resorted to in the present instance. The interference of Sir Ralph Noel with the editor of a newspaper seemed likely to produce that extremity, but the Baronet not having continued his dialogues with Mr. Perry, and Colonel Doyle having given Mr. Hobhouse every assurance that the family of Lady Byron, as well as herself, deprecated any *open* measures, it was not in his Lordship's contemplation at present to publish Lady Byron's



correspondence, or any other document on the subject. 1816.

The *intimation* had not proceeded from him, or the gentleman entrusted with the papers; but as the decided hostility of his wife's family made it probable that some advantage would be taken of his absence from England, he cautioned Mr. Hobhouse to be very guarded in his phrase, and to make no protestations as to what might be *hereafter* done with the correspondence. He was so far from alarmed at her Ladyship's hint of telling all that had occurred since the day of her marriage, that on first reading that intimation he snatched up a pen and insisted upon himself writing to Colonel Doyle, and declaring he would put the whole affair before the public at once; but Mr. Hobhouse, having reason to believe that the expression had originated in a mistake of Colonel Doyle's, whose whole conduct had tended to conciliatory measures, persuaded his Lordship to be content with denying the fact, and pledging himself to nothing. Lord Byron's friends could have no sort of fear of any publication which Lady Byron could make of her case, because they having themselves the whole correspondence, and having heard all the apprehensions of his Lordship's family and received all their evidence, knew that her Ladyship would have to bring forward nothing but her own assertions, and that those assertions would relate chiefly to confessions or avowals made by Lord to Lady Byron in the

1816. warmth of confidence or passion. They were prepared then to show not only the treachery of such a statement, but also to question the credit with which a candid public should receive any such testimony as the bare *ipse dixit* of Lady Byron could afford. They thought they saw and could prove, even from her own letters, such signs of weakness and perversion and even of duplicity, to say nothing of inveterate attachment to her own opinions, as would invalidate all she should say from her own knowledge only. They were aware that they had to deal with a singular character, who trusted rather to some rule of action and the attainment of a proposed end, than to any of the feelings and inclinations of her sex, both for a motive and justification of her conduct; and they knew that her Ladyship had already proceeded to certain lengths, which made it very unwise in them to reckon upon her forbearance. For instance: that she had told that Lord Byron, during their intercourse, had shown to her letters from his former paramours; that she had even retained these letters, and in one instance had shown one of them to a person nearly connected with her from whom it came, and in another instance to the person herself!!! They knew that in threatening to publish Mrs. Leigh's letters, her Ladyship had threatened to publish what was written under the strictest confidence by Lord Byron's sister, at a time that she and Lady Byron were equally under the delusion that his Lordship's

intellects were disordered, and when Mrs. Leigh was actually implored by Lady Byron to give daily accounts to her of her husband's health, and the proceedings of Mr. Le Mann.<sup>1</sup> They felt that no mercy was to be expected from any one who had thus menaced a husband with the evidence of a sister who had been betrayed by her kindness and attachment to, and confidence in, the person who was to ruin her brother for ever. They felt that a woman who would complain to her medical attendant that her husband had passed the whole night in throwing up soda-water bottles against the ceiling of her apartment "*in order to disturb her and her child,*" might have encouraged a thousand other extravagant suspicions which she would not hesitate to promulgate as part of the "*circumstances of her case.*" But in spite of all conviction that everything would be said that had made part either of Dr. Baillie's paper or of Dr. Lushington's brief, they thought that no positive allegations could possibly be worse or more injurious than the blind charges and rumours which had attacked their friend from every side, and some of which *were traceable to Lady Byron's legal advisers themselves.* It would, they thought, be much better, as well as more honourable, that Mr. Brougham should speak out at once, than that he should say that the real cause of Lady Byron's conduct was something on the part of her husband *too horrid to mention.* If it was *too*

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix H.



1816. *horrid to mention*, they thought it indeed necessary for their own character, and the continuance of their commerce with Lord Byron, that it should be mentioned; and that an unprejudiced public should be able equally with themselves to appreciate the full value of the charge.

They thought it preferable that half of that now alleged against him should be proved, than that *all* should be taken for granted. They were perfectly secure in their own minds against the establishment of any facts *too horrid to mention*—in the first place, because her ladyship had denied the enormities usually designated by that terrifying phrase; and in the second place, they thought too well of her to suppose she would live and part on terms of affection with any man whom she knew to have committed anything “*too horrid to mention*.”

With these considerations, then, his Lordship's friends were not alarmed by Colonel Doyle's intimation of the necessity on Lady Byron's part of publishing “all the circumstances of her case from the day of her marriage.”

They determined, however, to wait long enough before they themselves proceeded to publication, to enable them to judge of the conduct which her Ladyship intended to pursue; and notwithstanding that Lord Byron, up to the moment of his departure from England, encouraged the immediate disclosure of the whole case, they have to this time (May 25, 1816) refrained from all

1816.

public proceedings, chiefly from the hope that Lady Byron and her friends would see the propriety of adopting a course of conduct as amicable as it is possible, under circumstances of separation, for a wife and a husband to pursue. They now have, however, a complete justification for putting the defence of their friend into the hands of their countrymen; for her Ladyship has shown, by the only means in her power, that she will do nothing that may either directly, or by implication, relieve her husband and his friends from any of the odium which the scandalous rumours arising from the separation have attached to his name.

Incredible as it may appear, Lady Byron *has never repeated* that *disavowal*, which she gave to Mr. Wilmot, and which Mr. Hobhouse reminded her would be expected from her justice and generosity when the separation should have taken place. It will be recollected that her Ladyship promised "to consult the interests and feelings of others" in this matter, "consistently with the most candid considerations." What can be the *candid considerations* which prevent her from putting into the hands of Lord Byron's friends a direct proof (which she had before given) that they are not keeping company with a man who may be even charged with such crimes as would disqualify him for all society?

What is that consultation of the interests and feelings of others, which prompts her not to do

1816. her utmost to discredit a calumny of the blackest hue, which casts its baneful shade not only over the character of her husband, but must partially envelop his associates? It is impossible to account for this conduct, except by supposing her Ladyship actuated by the resolution not to *commit* herself to the performance even of an act of justice, by which any profit can be derived by her husband, or any favourable inference be drawn for the support of his character and the amelioration of his cause.

But as Lady Byron has refused this satisfaction to Lord Byron's friends, it is natural that they should seek for a justification elsewhere; and that, being deprived of what they feel they have a right to demand, and what it can be no sacrifice to give (as it was given before), they should, were it only for the sake of their own reputations, defend their friend, without being over-scrupulous as to the deductions which prove unfavourable, in that defence, to the person to whose candour and whose justice they have appealed in vain.

Doubtless, whenever these documents may appear before the public, it will be seen that her Ladyship has drawn that measure upon herself; and that her refraining to repeat her disavowal, claimed as it was by that one of Lord Byron's friends through whom she knows she obtained her much-wished-for separation, has not only justified, but in some measure necessitated, this



exposition of the case, which will be undoubtedly followed up by a reply to any counter-publication which her Ladyship may be advised to adventure. 1816

Anything which prevents or defers solitary reflection may be desirable in her Ladyship's present condition, and the longer that she can continue to flatter herself in public upon her *escape* (such is her phrase) from her husband, the longer will she put off the painful tranquillity which must ensue.

The flutter of resentment or pride, the exhortations of zealous companions, and the very agitation of those troubled waters on which she is now borne, may, for the moment, keep her buoyant: but when there shall be no longer any cause for anger, nor occasion for self-commendation, when decency itself shall prescribe the silence of friends, when the struggle is past, what is to preserve her from sinking in that dead calm that must succeed the tempest of her passions and her griefs? She has fatally mistaken Lord Byron—well will it be for her if she has not mistaken herself.

That time, which makes lighter the shade of those offences for which her husband so frequently implored her forgiveness, and implored in vain, will but deepen the regrets of her who refused them her pardon. His faults, and her grievances, will be forgotten; his repentance, and her obduracy, be remembered. Without the levity,

1816. the distraction, the boldness, of vice, her excellence will contribute to her affliction; and her heart, returning to its natural bias, will restore her to the influence of those tender, those charitable virtues, the temporary suspension of which she will feel to have borne so principal a share in causing all her sorrows.

She will often call to mind the affection which should have balanced, and the distress which might have excused, the failings of a husband and of a friend. She will reflect upon that genius, the fame of which first caught her fancy, and attracted her heart, to which it was her boast to be allied, and which was never sullied except by that hapless association. She will think of the ties she has dissolved, of the heart she has wounded, of the character she has tarnished. The husband, the companion, the poet, will then be loved, regretted, and admired; admired, perhaps, with all the warmth of a hopeless passion, stimulated by the poignant thought that they were once her own, but are now lost for ever.

As the copies of this correspondence commenced with Lady Byron's first letter from Kirkby, they shall be closed with the last which he received from the family of his wife. It seems to proceed from her whom, in that first letter, Lady Byron designated under the title of *Mam*; in other words, Lady Noel.

“ Miss Byron is perfectly well.

1816.

“ KIRKBY MALLORY,

“ *April* 18, 1816.

“ THE LORD BYRON, PICCADILLY TERRACE,

“ LONDON.”

P.S.—It appears that since these papers were drawn up, Lady Byron has recommenced her correspondence with Mrs. Leigh.





## APPENDIX

### ( A )

*From the Hon. Mrs. Leigh to Mr. Hobhouse*

1810.

SIX MILE BOTTOM, NEAR NEWMARKET,  
July 5, 1815.

DEAR MR. H—,

I have but one good excuse to offer for so rashly obtruding a very stupid correspondence upon you, which is I trust I am aware of your being very anxious to hear from my brother; and knowing him to be just now very lazy, I think the next best thing to hearing *from* him, must be to hear *of* him. Without further apology I will therefore proceed to tell you that I returned home ten days ago, after more than two months' séjour in Piccadilly, during which time B. was much delighted by several kind and interesting letters from you. *I* heard him sometimes declare an intention of answering, *then* vow that he did and would not write to anybody! and so on. . . . All which you, I am sure, can easily imagine him to say. He is looking particularly well, eats very heartily of *meat*, bread, and biscuit, allows himself half-a-pint of claret at dinner, when at home (and he seldom dines out), has abjured brandy and other spirituous liquors. Lady B. is *not* looking well or feeling so, but there is a very good reason for this temporary indisposition.

What a blessing it is that he has *such* a Lady B. ! for indeed I do think her the most perfect person I ever saw, heard of, or read of. . . . The only drawbacks to their present happiness and comfort are *pecuniary* concerns, and I grieve to say the remedy

1816. is to be the sale of Rochdale and Newstead, on the 28th of this month. Alas! for the dear old Abbey! my only remaining hope for it is in *your* "little Climb," and certain superstitious feelings of my own—but I must not enter upon the subject of my regrets for this dear place.

The sale was a measure hastily determined upon in a moment of despair, and I can't help fearing that, at least as far as poor Newstead is concerned, will be repented of if it takes place; but nothing can be urged successfully against it, and I have left off urging almost upon principle. I really believe that Lady B.'s father and mother are most kindly and generously disposed; but their power is very limited at present, owing to difficulties of their own, and the want of ready money, which till all the different bequests of Lord Wentworth's are disposed of and arranged cannot be forthcoming. Lady B. is, of course, most anxious B. should be convinced of their goodwill, and whatever may be wanting on hers on this and other points just now, I feel sanguine that a little time and patience will set all right and enlighten his *now* prejudiced mind as to who are his *real* friends. They go out but little, I think (and Lady B. thinks) almost *too* little, but you know B. can't do any[thing] moderately, and that being the case, it is perhaps the best extreme of the two, particularly as her health is not such as could bear hot rooms and late hours. You have heard of the *Drury Lane management*, probably; at first it struck me as being a good thing, employment being desirable, but as in other good things one may discover objections. I am glad to hear that they propose going to Seaham, which Sir R. N. offers for as long as they please. B. is well pleased at the thought of it, and they intend remaining there until after Lady B.'s confinement. I think this plan combines many advantages, and I hope will be productive of as much comfort as I wish and contemplate from it. I have now told you all, except that Lady B. is most anxious you should not attribute B.'s silence to her. Really and truly laziness is the whole and only cause, and you know him so well I do not fear your attributing it to any others. I am a fellow sufferer, for he does not write to me.

Adieu, dear Mr. H—,

Yours very truly,

A. L.



## ( B )

*Hon. Mrs. Leigh to Mr. Hobhouse*

1816.

DEAR MR. HOBHOUSE,—

I am so afraid of having given you a *wrong* impression of the person whom you thought had informed Mr. M. of your letter. I really think my information might only relate to the *late publication* and nothing *further* of its contents might be known to Mr. M. I always feel as if I had so much to say to you on the subject of our mutual interest that I have forgotten half when you are gone. Do not forsake your most unfortunate friend—if you do, he is lost—he has so few *sincere* friends and well judging ones. I can never express what I feel about him, but believe me, I am grateful from my heart for your friendship and friendly forbearance towards his infirmities, of whatever kind they may be. His *mind* makes him the most unhappy of human beings. Let us hope it may not always be so. God bless you. I thank you for all your kindness and beg to believe me,

Yours very truly,

A. L.

ST. J. P.,

January 3, 1816.

## ( C )

*Lord Holland to Lord Byron*

MY DEAR LORD,—

The note, which by an unexplained accident, though directed to me, went to your house, was from Lady Byron, requesting me to see her, and I have had that honour this morning. The chief, or indeed the only object of the interview, was to desire me to convey to you a letter in answer to the one she had received from you. Though I could not but be flattered at her thinking that anything would be more acceptable to you for coming through me, yet, after having troubled you so often and so fruitlessly on this painful subject, I felt myself compelled to say that I would in the first instance request your permission to send or to deliver the letter; but I hope and believe that you will have no objection to receiving it in this manner, and have only suggested such a difficulty from the extreme appre-

1316. hension which I felt from the very beginning of appearing officious in matters of so delicate a nature.

Yours,

VASSALL HOLLAND.

( D )

*Hon. Mrs. Leigh to Mr. Hobhouse*

DEAR MR. H—,

When you mention my going away, pray do it as from yourself—*your own opinion*. I have a dread of B. thinking it comes from any persecution from my husband or friends—the former particularly—and it would be unjust, as HE has never expressed the wish, but with a view to my not injuring my health, which he apprehended might suffer from anxiety and unhappiness. He has never pressed my return since he quitted London, and on the subject of reports has only been indignant and vexed, as it is but natural he should feel on the subject—in short, it has *never* been wished by *any* body from *unkind* motives towards my *brother*—and you know he is suspicious on these sort of things.

Pray excuse all this, and believe me,

Yours truly,

A. L.

WEDNESDAY, 2 O'CLOCK

(February, 1816).

( E )

*Mr. Hanson to Lord Byron*

MY DEAR LORD,—

I have just seen Dr. Lushington, and communicated to him the result of your determination last night, not to allow the Wentworth property to be admitted into the present consideration as an article of stipulation, and which *I most strongly advise your Lordship* not to deviate from. The doctor appeared much disappointed, and I would pledge my life on it he has no expectation of their being able to make out any case in a court. He said he could not proceed in the negotiation until he had communicated with Lady Byron on the subject of your counter-

project, which I think her Ladyship will accede to. It would be much more pleasant to you to allow any further increase of allowance to flow from your own spontaneous will, in case the Wentworth property should ever fall in. 1816

Believe me, my dear Lord,  
Yours most faithfully,

J. HANSON.

BLOOMSBURY SQUARE,  
March 11, 1816.

( F )

*Queries put to Lord Byron by Mr. Wilmot*

MR. WILMOT presents his compliments to Lord Byron, and requests his Lordship to inform him whether he did not hear the paper read, which *Mr. Hobhouse copied*, and whether he did not distinctly assent to it, *after hearing* that Lady Byron's declaration was satisfactory to his friends Messrs. Hobhouse and Davies?

2ndly. Whether it was not sent to Mr. Hanson by his Lordship's authority?

3rdly. Whether his Lordship did not say that they had better make haste and get the instrument ready for his signature, or that he might be off for Dalmatia, or words to that effect.

4thly. Whether his Lordship does not recollect Mr. Hobhouse's shaking hands with Mr. Wilmot, and wishing him joy on the success of his mediation.

5thly. If, as Lord Byron asserts, Mr. Wilmot's negotiation was confined to the recognition of a *mere principle* of separation (*sic*) *independent of terms*, why was Mr. Wilmot sent to Lady Byron, at Lord Byron's *especial* request, with a distinct proposition from himself relative to terms?

6thly. Whether the proposition with respect to the Noel property contained in the paper copied by Mr. Hobhouse was not Lord Byron's *own* proposition, with this exception, that Lord Byron proposed a *written promise*, and that Lady Byron insisted upon a *legal instrument*, to which alteration Mr. Wilmot *positively asserts* that Lord Byron and his friends Messrs. Hobhouse and Davies gave their unqualified assent.

A short answer to the above queries will oblige Mr. Wilmot.

23, MONTAGU SQUARE,  
Monday night, March 11, 1816.



## ( G )

1816.

*Conversation with Wilmot*

MR. HOBHOUSE has no difficulty in asserting that it was his persuasion that at the interview of Saturday last it was agreed that a legal adviser on the part of Lord Byron, and a legal adviser on the part of Lady Byron, appointing a referee between them, should proceed to arrange a private separation between the parties concerned.

He asserts that he thought at the time that Lord Byron had also assented to that *preliminary* principle.

He asserts that he thought Mr. Davies had also assented to it.

Since that period, that is, on Sunday, the day after, Mr. Hobhouse was solemnly assured by Lord Byron that he did not consider himself as bound in any way, except so far as extended to putting the memorandum of Mr. Wilmot into the hands of his legal advisers: this assurance has been frequently repeated by his Lordship to Mr. Hobhouse.

With respect to Mr. Davies, Mr. Hobhouse also asserts that the persuasion of that gentleman having assented to Mr. Wilmot's memorandum of Saturday arose from Mr. Wilmot and Mr. Davies having withdrawn together for the purpose, as Mr. H. supposed, of the *disavowal* of Lady Byron and the memorandum of Mr. Wilmot being both shown to Mr. Davies as they had been to Mr. Hobhouse. Mr. Hobhouse asserts that the first time Mr. Davies was questioned by him on the subject, he, Mr. Davies, assured Mr. Hobhouse that no such memorandum had been shown him; and that if it had, it would not have been assented to by him.

Mr. Hobhouse is desired by Lord Byron to state to Mr. Wilmot, that if his Lordship ever assented, or seemed to assent, to the memorandum as an ultimatum from which his legal advisers could not enable him to recede, it arose from an entire misconception of the case on his part; he never having had the least idea that he was bound by the assent, to the extent to which he gave it, to Mr. Wilmot's paper.

## ( H )

*Hon. Mrs. Leigh to Mr. Hobhouse*

1816.

*Tuesday, May 21st, 1816.*

DEAR MR. HOBHOUSE,—

I'm afraid I shall be too late for this day's post, but am anxious to acknowledge the receipt of your Thursday's letter, and its enclosure, which are most welcome and delightful to me. The verses console me for the novel, and that is saying a great deal, for *it* has vexed me more than perhaps you will think justifiable, from what I can say to you about it *at this distance*. I hope I *am* not mentioned in it (if I am I have not made the discovery), but only for fear you should imagine my vexations to be in any degree selfish. To return to what is better worth writing about—the verses you send me. I think them beautiful, and I need not add, they are most gratifying to me, who doat upon dear B. A thousand thanks to you for giving me the pleasure of seeing them.

I have again to-day heard from dearest B., his date *Coblentz* (May 11), with which he appeared “dans l'enchantement”; he sends me some beautiful lines, and some lilies-of-the-valley—written, and gathered on the banks of the Rhine. You shall have a copy of the former, if you like; but don't say they are to me, or I should be accused of all sorts of vanity, and God knows what! He had seen some monuments of Moreau and Hoche, which pleased him much; and in the other letter I had a most interesting description of Waterloo—the plains of which he had galloped over on a Cossack horse! He always inquires about his child, and I hope in a day or two to send him another bulletin. Perhaps you have by this time heard from him also. I had *dared* say all *you* did of the carriage affair at Brussels, and am glad to find we were right.

The new tragedy! How very absurd *the world* is, I was going to say; but it is useless to rail at it. You will laugh when I tell you that *two lines* of it struck me as so like what B. would have said, that I felt sure they had decided him in its favour, independent of every other merit it might possess. I wonder whether you will guess them? Colonel Leigh and I have been laughing at your answer to *the authoress*.

1816. I really *do* hope this last performance *will* finish her; but you have had but too many of my reflections on this subject. I mentioned in my yesterday's epistle, not being sure how many *official* letters I had written to Lady B., and not having, foolishly, kept copies. What I mean by *official* letters were those written by B.'s desire.<sup>1</sup> I can't express how I am surprised by the hint you give me about Colonel Doyle; it must regard my letters to Lady B. written in the *strictest confidence*. You may imagine that when she left my brother's house, with the strongest impression and *conviction* I may say on *my* part, if not on hers, that he was *insane*; that she entreated me, as the greatest and indeed only consolation she could feel, to give her daily bulletins of his health and proceedings—of my communications with Mr. Le Mann—that I considered it as a duty to do it. I have *ALL her answers* except one I recollect burning, I forget why; but these I have ever considered *sacred*. However, for my own justification, they may not always be deemed so, and as soon as I am equal to it, there are parts of them I may perhaps copy, to justify me to you at least (if justification can be wanted on such a point) for having communicated freely with her upon the state of his mind.

Captain Byron is in town. I wish you may see him, as he will confirm all I have told you. I sometimes think I must have lost my senses, so strange and incredible do some of the things I hear from *that* quarter appear to me! I'll try to recollect what letters I wrote. I do—that the first was so short that he expressed dissatisfaction at it.

*Wednesday.*

I wish to send this though I have not said half I wish. What I hear of Glenarvon is really enough to rouse every feeling of indignation—it has revived all this sad business, indeed I have not time by this post to say all I have to say about it—so adieu, dear Mr. H., and pray, when you have time, let me hear from you, and forgive, if you can, all I am inflicting on you. I always forgot to say Georgiana does not forget you and sends her love.

Yours very truly,

A. L.

<sup>1</sup> Query, Lady Byron's?



Say not *one* word to anybody of what I may express to you about B., etc., etc. I have made it a rule to *be silent* 1816.  
*AS LONG AS I CAN.*

## ( I )

*Mr. Hanson to Sir Samuel Romilly*

SIR SAMUEL,—

I feel myself placed in a most unpleasant situation, in consequence of having repeatedly assured Lord Byron that you were generally retained for his Lordship, which I find was the case some time ago; and finding that his Lordship would have occasion to resort to your advice in an unfortunate misunderstanding with Lady Byron, I sent my clerk about six weeks ago to your chambers, to ascertain whether the retainer had been given against Lord Byron, or would be taken without informing me. Lord Byron has, however, acquainted me that he has been deprived of the benefit of your counsel from your having been recently retained or advised with, by Lady Byron. I am sure you will do me the justice to favour me with a few lines to mention how this has arisen, that his Lordship may not imagine that I have not acted with a proper attention to his interest, or represented to him what was not strictly true.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obt. and most hble. servant,

JOHN HANSON.

BLOOMSBURY SQUARE,

*March* 18, 1816.

*To* SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY.

## ( K )

*Mr. Hanson to Lord Byron*

MY DEAR LORD,—

In justice to myself, I feel it necessary to trouble you with a copy of the letter I wrote to Sir Samuel Romilly, and his answer to it, which I am persuaded will satisfy your Lordship that everything on my part has been attended to, and your Lordship will oblige me by showing them to Mr. Hobhouse, as I should

1816. be sorry if he were for a moment to imagine that I had represented anything to him that was not correct.

Believe me,

My dear Lord,

Yours most faithfully,

JOHN HANSON.

CHANCEERY LANE,

*March* 19, 1816.

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